

# **KEY STAKEHOLDERS' EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC TEACHERS UNION (SADTU) IN EDUCATION**

**BY  
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## **DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I solemnly declare that **“Key Stakeholders’ experiences and perspectives on the role of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) in Education”** is my work and all sources consulted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **STATEMENT BY THE SUPERVISOR:**

This dissertation has been submitted with/without my approval.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Prof. Chikoko

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

SADTU	-South African Democratic Teachers Union
SACE	-South African Council of Educators
NAPTOSA	-National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa
NATU	- National Teachers Union
ANC	- African National Congress
RSA	- Republic of South Africa
COLT	-Culture of Learning and Teaching
KZN	-Kwa Zulu Natal
SACMEQ	- Southern & East African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
HOD	- Head of Department
DBE	-Department of Basic Education
DoE	-Department of Education
LRC	-Labour Relations Council
ANA	-Annual Assessment
GNU	-Government of National Unity
COSATU	-Confederation of South African Trade Unions
SGB	-School Governing Bodies
NAPS	-National Association of Parents in School Governance
NECO	-National Education Co-ordinating Committee

## **ABSTRACT**

This study sought to investigate how key stakeholders in education, namely, parents, teachers, school, principals and Department of Education officers view the role of the South African Democratic Teachers Union in education to be.

Generally Black teacher trade unions in South Africa has a very broad background, ranging from fiercely fighting the apartheid regime to defending labour rights of teachers. This role became important for SADTU because the laws that governed South Africa before 1994, suppressed Black people, had their educational and political rights violated, including their labour rights. Therefore, SADTU had a dual role to fulfil. The formation of SADTU led to a division within teacher unions that existed then, because of the divergent ideologies that SADTU and they held. Some of them believed in teacher professionalism, while others subscribed to better working conditions and teacher professional development. On the other hand, SADTU kept the militant approach and political affiliation. These two characteristics of SADTU are causing a great concern among stakeholders. This has led to SADTU, through media reports being blamed for the collapse of education especially in Black schools located in townships and rural areas.

An interest to investigate this topic was triggered by the apparent gap that seems to exist between SADTU's official documents such as its constitution and Vision 2030. These documents which are seemingly founded on the country's constitution, paint the union in a good light, yet, in actuality, the state of education is collapsing in schools. As a teacher myself and a member of SADTU, I have observed unprofessional behaviour from some colleagues who are also SADTU-affiliates, and this has made me question the level of professionalism and the promotion of Culture of Learning and Teaching especially in our Black township schools. I have also seen how the principal seems to be having challenges, with most SADTU members especially the leaders. I have also observed the animosity that exist between some SGB members and union leaders in the school. Therefore, I sought to find out from the mentioned stakeholders what they viewed to be the role of SADTU based on their experiences.

This study adopted a qualitative approach, and is located within the interpretivist paradigm. I adopted a multi-site case study research design. The study was conducted using individual face-to-face interviews, one group interview and document analysis. The findings suggest that SADTU is contributing to the collapse of education especially in township schools where there are high SADTU-affiliated teachers. This is caused by SADTU's militant approach, which involves violent protests and strikes, prolonged strikes, depriving learners from accessing education, unprofessional behaviour such as involvement in violent teacher strikes and prioritising union activities over teaching, which contributes to the death of the Culture of Learning and Teaching. The study recommends that SADTU begins to listen to the views and opinion of stakeholders, and to be consultative in approach, instead of being partisan and self-centred. Most importantly, it should invest in its members' professional development as it is happening in Europe. Lastly break away from the Tripartite Alliance, because SADTU seems to be distracted by politics from achieving the objective and visions set in its constitution and Vision 2030.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCING THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The aim of this qualitative study was to explore how the main stakeholders, which are namely parents, teachers, government officers and principals in the South African education landscape, view the roles of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). It further investigated the apparent disjuncture and gaps between what the public expects SADTU to do and what the union is actually doing in schools. This rift is heightened by the actuality of events that take place in schools under the leadership of SADTU, which are seemingly contrary to the expectations, views and experiences that the public holds regarding the role of teacher unions in general, the visions of SADTU in its constitution, Vision 2030 and other documents.

In this chapter, I outline the background of the role of trade unions in general in an African context, at three different stages, that of colonial, post-colonial and contemporary era (Mwanadzingo and Ben Said Dia, 2007). I further discuss the role of teacher trade unions in South Africa especially after the advent of the new dispensation in 1994. However, the fundamental issues in this study are that of the transformational agenda not implemented effectively by teacher trade unions in general and SADTU in particular, leading to school management experiencing challenges due to unionisation of teachers.

As a teacher myself who is a member of SADTU, I have a keen interest in understanding how the key stakeholders think concerning the presence of teacher unions in schools especially SADTU because in my own view, it has earned itself a bad reputation and image in the society through media reports. I possess some experience of teaching in two previously White Schools with most of their population being white and later teaching in township schools which are predominantly Black in learner and teacher demographics. This has made me wonder if there is any correlation between the allegations made against SADTU and the state of affairs in township and rural schools, in terms of education development and SADTU's involvement. This is so because of the amount of commitment I normally see amongst my colleagues in the former, participating in industrial action, while some colleagues in the latter

who belong to NAPTOSA seem less keen on industrial action, instead focus on teaching and learning even during national teacher strikes. I therefore sought to investigate how those with keen interest in education think and understand to be the role of SADTU in schools.

According to van derWalt (1997), trade unions have the duty to challenge issues such as one party state, neo-liberalism, forms of injustice, and the process of change regarding the economy and donor funding like what they did in Zimbabwe in challenging the Mugabe administration. It is against this backdrop that in South Africa, SADTU and other teacher trade unions are viewed by society as laboratories of democracy. Friedman (1987) states that trade union are knowledge production workshops and activity systems that are tasked with the prioritisation and promotion of social interaction and solidarity. One of the expectations from stakeholders is that SADTU upholds the above description so that it contributes to learner and teacher development. On the other hand, stakeholders acknowledged that SADTU out of the two popular teacher trade unions in South Africa, which is the National Professional Teachers Association of South Africa (NAPTOSA) and the National Teachers Union (NATU), emerges as the most powerful and influential one, boasting of a membership of 254 000 teachers in 2013. This kind of platform created by trade unions as described by Friedman (1987) creates potential widespread membership and participation of members, which is viewed as democratic by many.

Teacher trade unions in South Africa emerged from amongst other factors, the provision of unequal education to race groups that existed in the country during pre-democracy, which was instituted in policy, (Wills, 2014). This was a mechanism to suppress the Black majority South Africans. Black teachers in South Africa received many bureaucratic and authoritarian forms of control from the state while by contrast; their white counterparts were professionally treated and consulted in policy formulation (Chisholm, 1999). Hence, in the 1980s widespread political opposition to Apartheid, a system that oppressed mainly Black people, arose, which was linked to teacher resistance to unjust education policies.

While the South African education system might be viewed to have achieved many positive changes since 1994, scholars have observed from disciplines such as Commerce, that the

political transition in 1994 in South Africa brought challenges to the ruling party, the African National Congress from the business side. For example, it was daunting for the party to ensure an effective implementation of a detailed National Development Plan, in the eradication of the legacy of colonialism and apartheid (Finnemore, 2013). These changes did not spare the education sector; it also went through the same strain. Even today, experts in education such as Jonathan Jansen, still feel that there are many discrepancies in the education sector due largely to political influence. This has left me wondering if the political nature of SADTU is not stemming from its alliance with the ruling party, and if it has any significance influence in the way in which education management, teaching and learning has panned out to be especially in township and rural school in South Africa.

With all the possible factors highlighted above, that have possibly contributed to failure in developing education in South Africa, Finnemore (2013) argues that widespread violence among union members especially those whose membership is predominantly Black, is largely due to the long history of radicalism in the South African political landscape. The promulgation of labour laws and renaming of the Labour Relations Amendment Act in 1981 to the Labour Relations Act seems to have contributed to this attitude amongst workers whom the majority were teachers. Even though this Act granted everyone labour rights and autonomy irrespective of origin, it was however not consistent with political and economic rights of Black, Indian and Coloured people. They were still discriminated against in all sectors of employment and salaries and negatively affected by the Pass Laws on education provisions and all other injustices that came with the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (Burrows, 1986 Moll, 1989 and Maile, 1999). Blacks as a wider racial group, were deprived of political citizenship such voting, and that was retaliated by violence, which took a form of strikes, boycotts and stay-aways especially in township schools. There is concern and fear presented by empirical evidence, that the tremours of pre-1994 trade union radicalism and militancy are still felt even today, three decades later after the democratic dispensation. Today the word ‘strikes’ is synonymous with SADTU in the basic education sector. This fear is consistent with the general feeling of some stakeholders in education such as parents and school principals.

This background takes us right back to the question of what the society views the role of SADTU in education to be. However, the other concern is whether the roles and activities of SADTU in schools are in unison with the Republic of South African Constitution, South African Schools Act 84 (1996), the South African Democratic Teachers Union Constitution as Amended in 2014 and the South African Council of Educators Code of Conduct. These documents are the spine of any activities that teachers and education practitioners may engage in, and even more if they are SADTU members. This is so because SADTU out of all the other teacher trade unions in South Africa was founded on the ideology of rights of Black people to access education as it is envisaged in the Constitution of RSA Bill of Rights Constitution of RSA, Act 108 of (1996). Judging from the radical and militant nature of the union's activities, SADTU appears to disregard or overlooks the existence of these policy documents leading to the general collapse of school functionality and effective learning and teaching in township schools, as per the claims made by some researchers.

As I indicated above, White political subjugation and resistance to apartheid policies led to unionisation of Black teachers. A huge proliferation of teacher unions later experienced a growing division because of the different ideologies that each one of them held (Thurlow, 1990). Besides different ideologies, the first teacher unions were divided among racial, language and homelands line (Myburg, 1999). A dire need to merge all the unions and formulate one teacher trade union in a conference held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1988, proved futile because different teacher organisations possessed dicotyledonous ideologies at that time, which is still the case even today. Some of the core ideologies that some of those teacher groups upheld, were that a teacher trade union should concern itself with maintaining teacher professionalism. It advanced the notion that teacher professionalism and a militancy approach is irreconcilable (Mahlangu, 2013). On the other hand, the progressive teacher organisation took an anti-imperialism and anti-capitalist stance. It subscribed to the idea that a union amongst other roles should improve the conditions, which affect teachers at work such as long working hours, victimisation and lack of job security (Sanger, 1990). After the progressive teacher organisations merged, the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) was born in October 1990. It however, constantly found itself accused by the traditional teacher organisations for not advancing the professional aspects of education.

With the endless accusations, that SADTU received from its formation until today, that it is not advancing the key role of teacher trade unions, that of improving education in schools, SADTU leadership at national level through the voice of Mr. Membathisi Mdladlana its first president, defended the union. He said that being a teacher and a worker are two realities that teachers experienced throughout their teaching career. He further said that it was inevitable for teachers not to condition or concern themselves with favourable working conditions. (*Teachers as Educators and Workers*, New Nation, 3-9 April 1992, p.18).

From what Mr. Mdladlana said quoted above, he seems to imply that indeed SADTU does become militant when the need arises, which the other teacher organisations are critical of. The union's Secretary General, Maluleke when he outlined the roles of SADTU, further supports Mdladlana view. He said that the union has a keen interest in the issues that go beyond the classroom; it is also concerned with the welfare of teachers (*Society part of SADTU's core strategy*, Mail & Guardian 8-15 November 2012). I however note this statement with great concern because the Constitution of SADTU as Amended (2014) notes that the roles and duties of the union will be carried out through a militant approach to transform education. The Constitution Objectives Clause, Clause 6.10), commits to fostering a spirit de corps among teachers as well as among support staff in education and to promote and maintain high standards of ethical conduct, professional integrity and efficiency in the promotion and maintenance of standards of teaching and learning. However, this commitment seems only to exist on paper because there are comments made by the public including school principals on unprofessional and other contradictory behaviour by union members seemingly contradicting the vision of the union. The disheartening state of affairs in schools as portrayed by principals is also making headlines in local media.

On the other hand, the South African Council of Educators (SACE) Educator Code of Conduct, states that educators must commit to their duties. This has however been discovered to have been disregarded by many SADTU affiliated teachers and officials as well. The Department of Basic Education has found that the average teacher's absenteeism rate is 8% in the Eastern Cape Province. Kwa-Zulu-Natal Province is on the lead in this regard at 10.5 % (*Motshekga vs. SADTU: More trouble brewing in Education*. Daily Maverick, 28 February 2015). This article puts before us beyond any doubt puts before us the disillusionment that

exists towards SADTU by the Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga. The Department is dissatisfied with the manner in which SADTU handles the matter of teachers who absent themselves from work.

It is with the same concern that learner interests and the right to education seems to be sidelined and violated whenever SADTU members involve themselves in industrial action. The SADTU Constitution further states that the union has an objective to encourage the development of aesthetic aspects of the learner's life and to help promote his or her educational spirit and physical development. The same principle is echoed in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Bill of Rights Clause 29 (a) that everyone has a right to basic education including basic adult education Constitution of RSA, Act 108 of (1996).

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The Democratic Teachers Union of South African (SADTU) is mandated by its constitution in the objectives, (Clause 6.9) to encourage the development of aesthetic aspects of the learner's life and to help promote his or her educational spirit and physical development. Moreover, the South African Council of Educators (SACE) Code of Conduct, states that an educator must commit to their duties and be professional all the time. However, according to Motsohi (2001), there is a visible lack of professionalism especially in those schools where teacher demographics are mostly SADTU members and generally labelled as dysfunctional. A study conducted by Chisholm and Vally (1999) classifies teachers and learners according to how each group embraces the Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLT). Therefore, the key findings from this study are that teacher unprofessionalism negatively affects the COLT. According to Chisholm and Vally (1999), COLT are those school habits and values, which shape both teachers and learners. Moreover, it also shows that a school that exhibits a COLT usually has teachers and learners, who are punctual, regularly go to school and accepts authority, yet on the contrary, reports display how the Department of Education condemns teacher absenteeism especially in KZN schools.

School managements often find themselves under enormous pressure and intimidation from teacher unions when they want to implement and enforce effective school policies, (Sikhosana, 2004). In general, there is a great sense of disillusionment amongst many sectors

of society that concerns itself with education in South Africa, stemming from teacher unions' activities specifically SADTU. With scarcely documented literature that addresses this topic, there is a suggestion from key stakeholders' views and experiences, that there is a big gap between expectations and reality regarding the role of SADTU. With the background of trade unionism in Africa, and the core functions and roles that SADTU is mandated to fulfil, there seems to be a big contradiction in terms of the expected outcomes and what SADTU is actually doing in schools. This is coupled with disillusionment from teachers, the department of education and parents. In this study, I therefore sought to investigate these key stakeholders' views regarding the role of SADTU

### **1.3 Key research questions**

This study seeks to address the following questions:

1. What is the role of SADTU in Education?
2. What are the experiences and perspectives of the key stakeholders (parents, principals, teachers and Department of Education officials) towards the role of SADTU in education?
3. How do the key stakeholders think the role of SADTU impacts on the fulfilment of the Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLT) in education?

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

Despite a progressive SADTU Constitution, SADTU having the majority membership representation at SACE and founded on the principles of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, discrepancies seem to still exist between reality and what is expected to happen in schools in terms of developing and transforming education in the country. For instance, SACE expects teachers to behave in a professional way, by upholding the code of conduct for educators, regardless of being a union member or not, which SADTU is expected to

reinforce. However according to Willis (2014) there are cases of teachers behaving in a manner that later becomes detrimental to the education system, such as teacher strikes. There was a general feeling of disillusionment amongst parents and other stakeholders due to the poor performance of Grade 6 learners in 2007, which is attributed to the SADTU teachers' strike of 2007. This drop in results largely, was due to the strike (Willis, 2014). A study conducted to determine the extent of impact of the strike on the results, its utilisation in a cross sectional dataset or strategy known as SACMEQ III, reveals that teacher characteristics, including union membership to a large degree has an impact on learner performance (Willis, 2014). Thus, studying the views and experiences of stakeholders on what happens in schools regarding teaching and learning as well as management during a strike action may assist provide solutions to improve the quality of Culture of Learning and Teaching and professionalism amongst teachers.

A couple of studies have explored the rationales behind SADTU's militancy and how it seems to interfere with school management policies and the School Governing Bodies' (SGBs) roles. According to a study conducted in the Eastern Cape Province schools, the relationship between SADTU and school governance appears to be all about the jostling for power and conflict between these two entities that exist in schools. According to Vimbi (2013) to a large extent this is attributed to the attitudes of the SGB which like unions are political forums since they represent the interests of a particular section in the school, which is parents. Through this study, I hope to create a platform for parents and unions to interrogate the issues that hinder effective teaching and learning to take place, such as strikes, but more importantly how both parents and unions can positively influence policy through their ability to influence.

This study may also be a springboard for initiating dialogue amongst reluctant South Africans to discuss the role of teacher unions in a meaningfully, supportive and yet critically as well (Bloch, 2009). In his book, Bloch (2009) discusses factors that he terms a "toxic mix" which contribute to the decline of education in South Africa. One of the issues that he brings up is that as a nation we have been silent for a long time over the role of teacher unions in the country. He further argues that teacher trade unions should be held accountable in carrying out their legislative mandate as guided by the Constitution of South Africa.



With all the available studies in the area of teacher unions in South Africa, there is still a gap in the knowledge about the role of SADTU in the development of sound education management in schools, how stakeholders view teacher unions' role to be and the actual activities of teacher unions in schools. This study sought to contribute towards filling the gap.

Another possible contribution of this study is in assisting us understand the process of recruitment of teachers in occupying promotion positions such as Heads of Department (HODs), principals and office-based ones such as circuit and district managers, in SADTU dominated territories. In a study conducted in township schools in Gauteng, Paddy and Jarbandhan (2014), reports that SADTU has a very strong militant influence in the recruitment of teachers into promotional posts. The study further reveals that educators that work in these schools displayed characteristics of rebelliousness, such as not tendering leave forms, but most importantly, the power of the SGB and the principal is compromised as SADTU manipulated the recruitment process to give advantage to their desired candidates

Overall, this study should benefit all key stakeholders in the study (Murray & Beglar, 2009). The key stakeholders in this case are parents, teachers, principals and the circuit office, which is the representative of the Department of Education. The study hopes to contribute a body of knowledge regarding the role of teacher unions in education in South Africa. Such knowledge is vital to understand in the interpretation of policies that are responsible for education transformation and development.

## **1.5 Study outline**

This section is about outlining the gist of each of the five chapters of this research report. It unfolds as follow:

Chapter One introduces the whole study and presented the statement of intent to the whole study. It further outlines the background and overview of the study as it is expected to unfold

in the chapters to follow. The chapter concludes by clarifying the terminology that has been used in context throughout the study.

Chapter Two discusses the literature that has informed this study. The key issues that have emerged from the literature are:

- Understanding teacher trade unions' militancy
- Parents' experiences on the role of SADTU
- Teachers' perspectives and experiences on the role of SADTU
- Understanding the role of teacher trade unions in school leadership and management
- Understanding the role of SADTU in promoting COLT in education
- The role of SADTU in facilitating teacher promotions

In Chapter Three, I position the study as a qualitative research approach, where I am attempting to understand particular situations and events through an ongoing interactive process where I have conducted face-to-face interviews, which are first hand experienced accounts of participants. I am also explaining how I have managed to use both the interviews and document analysis as two data generation instruments for the study.

In Chapter Four, I present the data in four themes that emerged from the key findings:

- The ability of SADTU to influence decisions
- Gaps that exist between SADTU's policy and stakeholders' experiences and views
- SADTU's role in educational change and development
- The role of SADTU in developing teacher professionalism
- Emerging issues

Lastly, Chapter Five is a summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The summary runs through the intention of the whole study, while the conclusions are informed by the findings that emerged in Chapter Four leading to the recommendations that I make.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In this Chapter, I review literature. I begin the chapter by examining key concepts that inform the study so that the reader is able to understand the context in which I have employed them in this study. This is followed by a discussion of themes or topics that have emerged as I interacted with empirical evidence and other issues such as current affairs presented in newspapers and official documents for example the Constitution documents. This study is not confined to studies that only address the role of SADTU in schools as viewed by key stakeholders, it also focuses on studies with interest in SADTU militancy in schools, the role of SADTU in teacher recruitment, and the role played by labour unions in promoting teacher development outside the continent of Africa. There is a view that indeed those that worry themselves with education in schools, especially parents, principals, teachers and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) officers, have certain expectations from the unions, and they have witnessed unacceptable behaviour from SADTU members that put the education of learners and the teaching profession at risk. Sikhosana (2004) cites examples of his own experiences as a teacher before being promoted into an official of the DBE. His study shows that in unionised schools environments, school principals' management decisions largely are coupled with fear and inconsistencies. I then proceed to discuss the theoretical framework that this study is premised on. The theoretical framework assist me to understand if SADTU's actions are consistent with it or not.

In reviewing the literature, I attempt to ascertain if there are any gaps that exist between what SADTU claims to be its role and what the key stakeholders allege to have experienced. There is a common thread running through much of the literature on SADTU's activities. The suggestion is that they are contradictory to what is expected, which is promoting the Culture of Teaching and Learning (COLT) one of them is unprofessionalism amongst teachers who are members of the union, which is manifested in many forms and platforms in the field of education in South Africa. According to Zengele (2009) implies that one of the many forms of unprofessionalism is SADTU

initiated teacher strike actions. Teacher strikes have a history of causing disruptions in education and an increased learner failure rate. What may sound as a general disillusionment amongst parents, studies such as Willis (2014) have shown that the 2007 SADTU teacher strike affected mainly primary school learners especially those in Grade 6. This was evident in their Annual Assessment (ANA). Therefore, I shall through the lens of these studies, view the conflicting views on the role of SADTU in education.

## **2.2 Definition of Key Concepts**

The following four terms are necessary to clarify:

### **Trade union:**

According to Vall (2010) a trade union is as an organisation which mainly consists of employees who are joined together to achieve a common goal and promote their interest by collective action. The word ‘collective’ means that the workers strive to achieve a common goal, by negotiating with their employers about their grievances, which mostly concern wages. Negotiating in industrial labour relations is referred to as collective bargaining. Negotiations help to avoid disputes thus bring the employer and employee to common terms or mutual agreement. This term will be used throughout the study to refer to the South African Trade Union (SADTU). Teacher unions are often viewed as part of the cause for problems and disruptions experienced by public schooling systems (Whittle, 2007). Teacher unions’ roles in education are one of the highly argued issues in educational reform, especially in South Africa, in post-apartheid era. They are often regarded as conformist and hostile to educational transformational agenda and the quest of quality teaching and learning in schools (Whittle, 2007). Critics of teacher unions have maintained that unions raise the cost of education (Eberts and Stone, 1986), further making it even more difficult for principals to manage schools (Johnson, 1986), and that the presence of unions in schools leads to strained relations in schools (Fuller *et al*, 2000) which often compromises educational quality. In this study, the term trade union will be used to refer to teacher trade unions both in South Africa and internationally.

## **Professionalism:**

The term refers to the teachers' ability to improve their excellence of service than of their status (Hoyle, 2001). Teachers in this study are people who are expected to render quality service to the public, but if they fail to do so, they are dismissed as unprofessional. The array of their service consists of exemplary living and taking responsibility for their actions. Teacher professionalism is one of the highly argued teacher job description by the government and the public. At the inception of SADTU at the Harare Declaration, professionalism was at the core of the tag of war between teacher organisations. NAPTOSA being the second largest teacher trade union in South Africa after SADTU, they both have divergent ideologies and approaches to education, with NAPTOSA focusing on teacher professionalism while improving and negotiating better working conditions for teachers in the Labour Relations Council (LRC). By contrast, SADTU have emerged in direct opposition to apartheid. It is justifiably militant, political and defends the right of the workers than promoting professionalism (Chisholm, 1999). Various incidents gathered from different studies imply that professionalism amongst SADTU teachers is rare if not none existent at all. Sikhosana (2004) acknowledges that SADTU has a keen interest in the development of intervention strategies to address education crisis, like in the case of a decline in the performance of learners in the ANA in 2007 and matric results in 2011, where SADTU had initiated a teacher strike. However, the study also reveals that despite the efforts to improve education in schools, there is still a lack of motivation among teachers and professional attitude from some SADTU members.

The term "professional" can be traced back to the Middle Ages when young men were educated in Roman Catholic Cathedral schools to prepare them as church leaders, according to Crook (2008) until the 1970 when it was the so-called 'traits model' (Hoyle and John, 1995). The model emphasised the important intellectual role that teaching is playing in society. It also identified various traits that are necessarily for a profession. Some of those traits are:

- An exceptional, positive and dynamic service
- An emphasis on knowledgeable techniques in performing this service

- A long period of intensive training
- An array of independence for both the individual practitioner and for the professional group as a whole
- Emphasis on service rather than monetary gain

There is a general view that unionism and professionalism are contradictory to one another (Shalem, 1990 and Govender, 2004). It is for this reason that teacher unionisation has been seen by some sectors of the South African public as amounting to the reduction of the teaching profession to merely a job, instead of a profession (Heystek and Lehoko, 2001) and (NAPTOSA, 2005). This view was also spread by organisations that criticized teacher unions in the South African media. Govender (2004), Heystek and Lehoko (2001) argue that in the context of South Africa, the dichotomous nature of teacher unionism and teacher professionalism is a sore issue for both unions and professional bodies and the public. Instead, there is a gradual talk about ‘professional unionism’, which sees the notions of professionalism and trade unionism as not only compatible, but also as different sides of the same coin. Therefore, professionalism in this study is the ability of teachers to prioritise transformation and improvement of education before their own needs.

### **Democracy:**

According to Gutman (1987) democracy refers to the helm of professional responsibility of teachers. Teachers have a responsibility to cultivate democracy friendly action where there is collaboration between them and other stakeholders. Brennan (1996) coined the term democratic professionalism to highlight the need for stakeholders to work hand and glove. In South Africa, the term is very closely linked to the country’s constitution, openness, transparency and accountability. Teacher unions across the world are often viewed as part of the problem in public schooling systems (Whittle, 2007). They are often viewed as adversative to educational transformation and the pursuit of quality education in schools, which often compromise educational quality (Fuller *et al.*, 2000). Although there is limited literature that addresses the issues of trade unions being agents of change in education reform, there is a sudden move by trade unions in the UK, Canada and USA to

respond to a sudden decline of their political involvement by building effective bridges with external role-players like parents, community organisations and other interest groups (Whitty, 1997). An important aspect of this process is to ensure that the public image of teachers and their unions is changed (Bascia, 1998). This study therefore discusses democracy in relation to the claims and allegations made by previous studies on the lack of collaboration between unions and key stakeholders in schools, which suggests that SADTU is not democratic in its approach it does not consult stakeholders.

### **Role:**

According to the Business Dictionary ‘role’ is defined as a principal purpose of an organisation to assist its members. Over the past decades, teacher unions have played an important role in teacher development and debates around the professionalisation of teachers. The term ‘role’ is used in this study to mean the principal purpose of SADTU in developing education. It is further used to discuss the way in which the participants view the role of SADTU based on their experiences and according to document review such as the Constitution of SADTU.

## **2.3 Understanding teacher trade unions militancy**

In this section, I discuss views on SADTU’s militant approach and the possible impact it might have on education. Across the world, teacher unions are often viewed as part of the cause for problems and disruptions experienced by public schooling systems (Whittle, 2007). Teacher unions’ roles in education are one of the highly contested issues in educational transformation, especially in South Africa, in post-apartheid era. They are often regarded as not flexible to modification and hostile to educational reform and the quest of quality teaching and learning in schools (Whittle, 2007). Critics of teacher unions maintain that unions are over-taxing education (Eberts & Stone, 1986), further making it more difficult for principals to manage schools (Johnson, 1984) and that the presence of unions in schools leads to strained relations in schools (Fuller *et al.*, 2000) which often compromises educational quality. Through the lens of this background on teacher unions, I present the extent to which SADTU fits in this portrayal. A wide range of literature has

informed this study about one of the obstacles preventing SADTU from meeting the expectations of parents, teachers and government; it is its militant nature and approach to education.

The first teachers' strike that was also joined and supported by ordinary people in 1989 where more than 6 000 South African teachers made various demands to the apartheid government, highlights the aggressive nature of SADTU from its early formative years. In 1990, SADTU affiliated to the Congress of South African Trade Unions' (COSATU) which is in Tripartite Alliance with the ANC. This means that SADTU has interests in party politics. One will therefore assume that SADTU will never be involved in violent strikes but will engage the government in dialogue. According to Amtaika (2013) violent strikes instead of a peaceful dialogue is a continuation of a culture of militancy, which dates back to the armed-struggle. The armed struggle aimed at compelling the apartheid government to comply with the demands of workers but also to change the politics of the country, to give Black people the same rights as the White people. Therefore, the mandate of SADTU did not stop with improving salaries and better working conditions for its members, but also influenced the politics of the country. It is for this reason that this study sought to study out how the role of SADTU in politics affects its role in education. Amtaika (2013) further argues that SADTU's objectives of fighting for better education for all is side-tracked by focusing on material gains and political achievements. This was evident when through the tripartite alliance; SADTU became an influential machine of political backing for the ANC in the 1994 national first democratic elections. SADTU in the long run has been caught up in the ideological clashes of the ANC by seeking to influence policy formulation. This begs the question: Do SADTU members play dual roles, to teach and organise political support for the ANC.

According to Sikhosana (2004) the actions of SADTU are often a catalyst to conflict and violence associated with teacher strikes in schools. For example, this author cites episodes of school principals' management decisions, which are often overruled by militant SADTU leaders. This causes fear and inconsistency in the decision process. It is believed that such behaviour by the principals stems from intimidation, threats and militant tactic strategies effected by strong teacher union members within their schools. With about 64% of principals who participated in this study, by responding to a questionnaire, did confirm that indeed teacher unions do have a role to play in school management and towards



effective professional development of teachers. These principals held the view that was indicative of a need for trade unions to be involved in the management of schools. Moreover, through this study we are introduced to another side of the union, where the author further acknowledges that SADTU has a keen interest in the development of intervention strategies to address education crisis. For an example, in the case of a decline in the performance of learners in the ANA in 2007 and matric results in 2011, where SADTU had initiated a teacher strike. However, there is a disjuncture between what studies and other literature presents to be the actual acts of unprofessionalism and what the union stands for. The details provided up to this point, are consistent with the literature that presents the persistent lack of motivation and professional attitude among SADTU teachers despite efforts from the union to improve the then state of ANA and matric results. Through such studies, I am able to unearth the inconsistencies that seem to exist in school managements, because of militancy.

Regarding causes of militancy and unprofessional behaviour among SADTU-affiliated members, Rousouw *et al.*, (2010) in a *Mail & Guardian* article, presents the background to the continuing culture of militancy, which dates back to the armed-struggle in the 1980s. This article discusses a perspective that claims that SADTU has been overshadowed by its interests in party politics. Such an action is in contrast with the vision of SADTU that is discussed in this union's Vision 20130.

Furthermore, Vision 2030 talks about the nature of SADTU being a trade union, and yet not discounting its ability to continue to influences social, political and economic trajectories it embraces as it advances with the historical demands of its given and operational period. Even though the political aspect of the role of SADTU is presented in its vision, it is secondary to that of making education basic and central and being the agent of change in society. Thus in this study, I sought to study whether or not SADTU was prioritising politics over education. During the negotiations in February 1990 held by the Government of National Unity (GNU), to mark the beginning of a process of political negotiations, which radically transformed the politics and education terrain of that time, Wolpe (1992) has argued that political negotiations proved difficult for the ANC and other liberation movements. As a result, the liberation movement involved different stakeholders such as COSATU and business people and the New Educational Policy Initiative (NEPI), which was a product of the National Education Coordinating

Committee (NECO), was born as an attempt to counter weight apartheid (NECC, 1992). The general agreement in the democratic movement at the time was the integration of education and training in a system that would support lifelong learning for all – adults, out of school youth and pre-schoolers. There was also a great deal of unanimity on the principles that were to reinforce the new education system namely equity, redress and quality in education (NECC, 1992). It is evident that from the onset, the involvement of COSATU as a mother body of trade unions was mainly to equalise endowments between black and white education by addressing some of the more obvious aspects of apartheid education inequality with regard to globalisation and market labour demands. COSATU had been vocal advocates of outcomes-based curriculum reform, and the introduction of a national qualifications framework (Christie and Jansen, 1999). However, in the process that was meant to bring about reforms in the country's education, SADTU remained indifferent and aloof to the process and President Thabo Mbeki castigated it. This open act of criticising SADTU, encouraged the Tripartite Alliance be in solidarity with SADTU and participated in the vote of no confidence against President Mbeki and ultimately his recall at the 8<sup>th</sup> ANC Polokwane Conference, where President Zuma was elected as the new President of the ANC. President Mbeki had also identified elements of unprofessionalism and militancy, which were not helping, but destroying education. He said:

The members of SADTU stand out as competent practitioners of the *toyi-toyi* (referring to a protest dance) ...We (meaning SADTU members) are seen as excellent tacticians as to when to disrupt the school programme...We (SADTU members) behave in a manner which seems to suggest we are alienated from the revolutionary challenge of the education of our youth and masses and greatly inspired by the valued systems which motivates the traitor and the criminal, (Mbeki, T, Speech to Fourth SADTU National Congress, 1998).

Wills (2014) discusses another aspect of militancy in her study. The main aim of that study was to investigate the extent of teacher strikes on learner progress in schools. According to the study, with NAPTOSA being the second largest teacher trade union in South Africa after SADTU, both unions have divergent ideologies and approaches to education. NAPTOSA focuses on teacher professionalism while improving and

negotiating better working conditions for teachers in the Labour Relations Council (LRC) and by contrast, SADTU have emerged in the direct of opposition to apartheid policies, with no interest in teacher professionalism (Chisholm, 1999). Regarding the impact of teacher strikes especially the two major ones, the one of 2007 and 2010; literature shows that learners' achievement at primary school in Grade 6 was mostly negatively affected. This was revealed in the Annual Assessment (ANA) tasks. A cross sectional dataset or strategy (3rd Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality) - SACMEQ III, (Kingdon and Teal, 2010) was applied to determine the extent of the impact, although there are limitations associated with this dataset. The dataset is used in India to investigate the impact of teacher characteristics, including union membership, on learners. Even though this dataset is foreign to South Africa, but it was relevant for this purpose because teachers who belonged to a teacher union, participated in a strike and results were affected. SADTU is prominent for its militancy and political involvement (Chisholm, 1999) more than attempting to develop teacher professionalism and the Culture of Teaching and Learning (COLT). In this test, Grade 6 learners were tested in more than one subject area and the results were astonishing. In the more privileged quantile 4 and 5 schools mostly located in urban areas, with higher average student achievement and moderate teacher strike activity, there is no evidence of a negative average impact of teacher strike activity on learner achievement. In contrast, there was an observed impact of teacher strike action on learners learning in rural and township under-privileged schools. In these schools, where teacher unions are strongly represented and more militant, strike activity seems to be harmful to teaching and learning (Wills, 2004). The study further reports that the strike duration was typically long and widespread in schools where there were many SADTU members. An observation was made that a learner's performance in a subject taught by a striking teacher was about 10% of standard deviation lower than a learner's performance in a subject taught to him or her by a teacher who was not involved in the strike activity. The scale of the effect is roughly equal to a section of a years' lost learning despite the average strike duration in these schools representing only 7% of official school days that year (Wills, 2004). With these facts tabled before us, it was in the interest of this study to determine if militancy and political involvement has any significance impact towards teaching and learning in schools. This raises the question as to whether urban schools with predominantly NAPTOSA members have better results compared to township and rural dominated SADTU dominated teachers.

While the role of SADTU during apartheid is still valued by Black teachers and the ANC, but its role today in the education landscape of South Africa is questionable (Wills, 2014). Even though my study is qualitative in nature, I have also explored a quantitative approach to the same topic used by NEEDU (2012) and Patillo, (2012), where they studied the effects of teacher strikes from an efficiency perspective. SADTU's involvement in strikes is negative for school efficiency. According to these two studies, SADTU is participating in quiet corruption. This means that, teachers are remunerated while they have failed to display competency in the way that they do their work. In addition to lost workdays due to industrial action or union meetings, negative efficiency may be manifested in the form of intrusion in the appointment of school principals, as Sikhosana (2004) reports above. The demand or supply of teachers in a school may also be compromised.

Furthermore, SADTU's historical links with the liberation movement and its large membership, gives them the leeway to considerably influence national policy decisions in education. Beyond advocating for improved pay, benefits and conditions of work, they remain strongly opposed to any national policies entailing forms of monitoring or control of teachers' work. This is true with the current state of the ANA for Grade 6 – 9. I remember in one of the briefing sessions at work before the commencement of teaching and learning, the site steward, warned us against the writing of ANA. He gave many reasons why this assessment should not be administered, one of them was that, it has no value and it is extra work for teachers, moreover, teachers are not remunerated for marking these assessments. Another example is that of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) suggesting that teachers that mark Matric Examinations ought to be tested for competency. This brought an uproar from the SADTU stating that the DBE had no confidence in teachers, the DBE had no choice, but to abandon the proposed competency test policy for teachers. The key issues that emerge from the literature is that, SADTU gets away with acts of unprofessionalism, by defending them, leading to the employer conceding to its demands. This shows the ability and power that SADTU has to persuade and influence the government.

The total disregard of the partnership that exists between SADTU and the government has been seen in many incidents such as in that of 2010 teachers' strike, where the alliance

between the two was strained. SADTU showed its supremacy through its success in achieving a salary increase of 8.6 %, housing allowance of a R1000 and the equalisation of medical aid subsidies demands (Letsoalo, 2010). These demands cost more than 17% more than what the government had budgeted for towards each increment (Letsoalo, 2010). Another continued disregard of the partnership between SADTU and the government was when during the strike action, the union captured its sentiments on this on placards: “You give us 7% increase, we give you 7% pass rate.” When I compare this strike and that of 1989, which was the first strike initiated by teacher unions in South Africa, the latter, was characterised by the conservative professionalism of teachers as elites in their communities, and many ordinary people that supported their cause. On the other hand, the 2010 strike comes across as a suggestion that teachers had lost integrity as professionals; instead, these were replaced by hooliganism and militancy (Amitaika, 2013). Teachers disrupted classes and threatened their colleagues and learners with violence in schools. School property in many instances was vandalised. In some schools, trial examinations were interrupted or abandoned, while in some places, measures put in place for final examinations were executed in a tense and uncertain atmosphere. Learners found themselves victimised for trying to learn on their own, certain teachers would come and chase them out of the classrooms. The situation was so bad, such that some SADTU members got charged for vandalism and ignoring court interdict. Such behaviour led the then ANC provincial secretary David Makhura to label SADTU leadership as “rogue and ill-disciplined.” (Moeng, 2011).

The key issue coming out of this section are that SADTU initiated strikes are disruptive and disregard the right to education. This action by teachers suggests that SADTU teachers are unprofessional; they do not prioritise the needs of learners before their own. This further suggests that the principles of democracy are violated. Lastly, while militancy worked to fight political subjugation, it seems as if it has no place in today’s political and education landscape.

## **2.4 Parents’ Experiences**

In this section, discuss the views, experiences and thoughts of parents regarding the activities and role of SADTU in the education of their children. It is worth noting that,

parents are one group of stakeholders in education that are at the receiving end especially during strikes. According to Wills (2004), parents become very worried when teacher strikes erupt. Specifically, the National Association of Parents in School Governance (NAPSG) defined the 2010 strike as tragedy. Mahlomola Kekana, the president of the NAPSG told the press that the impact of that strike could affect the entire generations the damage far outweighed the gains made by public servants, in particular the teachers. In other media fora, as SAFM's the *After Eight Debate* on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 2010, various callers castigated teachers, blaming them for failing to imitate their predecessors in 1989 who were not only committed to teaching but also conducted themselves professionally. The sentiments from parents as represented by the NAPSG present to us the expectations that parents have regarding what SADTU is supposed to do in schools, in this scenario, the expectations were not met. The parents are lamenting that it is their children who will suffer the consequences of the strike more than the teachers will. Middle class parents can make choices determined by markets on supply and demand of labour, on where to take their children for education. These parents are able to make such decisions because of the educational background that they might possess. They are able to interpret the economy and labour demands for their children in the future. On the other hand, uneducated parents may remain with no choice because they are not aware and if they are, they are not financially equipped to remove their children from schools where teaching and learning is constantly interrupted by teacher militant tendencies (Apple, 1999).

According to Odhiambo and Hii (2012) there are many studies conducted to explore what constitutes effective school leadership. Their study posed interview questions posed to teachers, learners and parents of a Catholic School in Australia on how they view and experience school leadership. Policy makers gain a lot of insight from studies such as these, however, most of them tend to focus on school leaders' perspectives and ignore those of the rest of the stakeholders such as parents and learners. Generally, the voice of the latter is unheard in most studies pertaining to education leadership. The explanation for this is that sometimes, learners are considered young and cannot be involved in adult discussions. Even though this section is not about children but I want to highlight that, sometimes the most important voices in research are ignored. In this case, the voice of the parents is vital because as I have mentioned in the opening paragraph, that parents are at the receiving end. Cranston (2007) in Odhiambo and Hii (2007), argues that it is of

outmost importance for the Australian education system to take into account and understand the perceptions of the beneficiaries of education, especially when effective school leadership has become the buzzword nowadays. Even though the study is not necessarily addressing the role of unions as viewed by parents and learners, it is useful in the elaboration it makes of effective leadership styles. My interest was to investigate whether parents expect to be involved in the decisions that unions make or if they thought there could be any consultations or collaborations that can exist between the two. Often parents find themselves sidelined in many decisions taken in schools.

Secondly, parents according to the South African Schools Act (84) 1996, are entitled to be included in the governance of the schools through School Governing Bodies, and they constitute a bigger majority. The Act stipulates that school governing bodies are responsible for drafting certain school policies. However, some of the challenges that parents come across in the process of governing the schools, is being sidelined or manipulated by the different other role players in the school, such as principals and even unions. This is largely due to low levels of education and the inability to interpret and implement policy (Xaba, 2011). Apart from being excluded and manipulated to take decisions that they do not agree with, they also often find themselves at loggerheads with union leaders in the school. The reasons behind this are mainly due to the conflict of interest. One example that Xaba (2011) presents in his study, is where by parents feel constrained by not being able to deal with matters of educator misconduct and learner discipline. They felt that to assist the school, it would be more effective if they were also allowed to be involved in such matters. By policy, the SGB has no jurisdiction over teachers, it cannot discipline them because they are employed by the DBE and most importantly, protected by labour law, and that is where the unions come in.

The key issues that emerge from this section is that key stakeholder's views are very important when investigating how far unions affect education. This is so because it gives the researcher wider suggestions regarding the topic at hand. Moreover, parents are a very important group of society that is eventually affected by the activities of unions, so it is important that I hear their voice as well. Most importantly, there is a jostling for power between parents and teacher trade unions in schools.

## **2.5 Teacher Perspectives and Experiences**

In this section, I discuss the views and experiences of teachers that lead to teacher professional misconduct. The militant approach by SADTU members is not only visible during teacher strikes and demonstrations for better salaries and conditions of work. Similar actions are seen when members demand promotion positions because of their qualifications (Vimbi, 2013). In a study conducted by Evans, (1998) in Harris and Crossman (2006) in United Kingdom (UK) schools, poor recruitment of teachers although not always, is reported to lead to low job satisfaction among teachers. A survey of job satisfaction by Gardner and Oswald (1999) indicates that teachers compared to other professional groups, were unhappy employees of the state leading to many of them resigning or contemplating resigning. The key finding of the study is that this feeling of dissatisfaction among teachers was not entirely a UK phenomenon, but there are other similar results reported in other countries like South Africa.

In South Africa, teachers also display the same characteristics due to many experiences, among them frustration. I therefore sought to investigate the causes of teacher professional misconducts or unprofessional behaviour by reviewing a study that was conducted by Vimbi (2013) in secondary schools located in Gauteng Province in South Africa. Although the study focused on the militancy of teacher union members around the issues of labour rights being infringed upon by principals and being forced to occupy lower ranks while they are highly qualified, but it still highlights the source of rebelliousness among teachers, especially SADTU members. The study found that the more militant members appear to have studied further; they will demand to occupy top management positions because they do not trust the recruitment system of that particular institution. This implies that teachers are disillusioned with the way in which allocation of posts takes place in schools. Another borne of contention is that in some particular schools where the study was conducted, the respondents reported that sometimes management strategies followed by principals are outdated, and do no good to resolve conflict. While the majority of the respondents belonging to the militant SADTU teachers' union, were young and had little teaching experience, mostly less than eleven (11) years, but they had qualifications beyond Matric + 3-year degree with and up to date knowledge of management of education and schools which the principal lacked. The militant respondents comprised more of males than females. The majority of militant



teacher union members are teachers who may desire to occupy certain positions of power. Their militancy may be directed towards those in higher positions. However, in the same study, there are respondents who articulated different sentiments about militancy amongst SADTU members. They said that it is not justified; negotiation was the correct way of voicing grievances. Another issue that was raised was the matter of not participating in strikes because of fear of being labelled militant and supporting perceptions that SADTU members are militant and irresponsible by the public and the DOE. Moreover, a majority of the responds when asked if they saw teaching as a job or a calling or a profession, a whopping 53.49% viewed it as a calling while 6.98% viewed it as work and 39.53 viewed it as a profession (Vimbi, 2013).

The key issues that I am raising in this section are that, unprofessionalism is sometimes caused by unhappiness among teachers. This act of unprofessionalism manifests itself as rebelliousness especially among the younger and more qualified male teachers who expect to be promoted at work. Furthermore, the section presents divergent views within membership of the same union and this study seeks to utilise them in order to investigate if there are any expectations and experiences that SADTU – affiliated teachers hold regarding the roles of their union in terms of assisting them climb the professional ladder or in the development of education.

## **2.6 Understanding the role of unions in school leadership and management**

In this section, I discuss the views and experiences that school principals and School Governing Bodies members hold regarding the role of SADTU in their own schools. Without being seen to be jumping the gun, the content for this theme will be discussed at length in the theoretical framework section. It is however important for this chapter to bring some its details here for the reader to understand how the unions are expected to assist school leadership and management to improve the school instead of working against it. In the above theme, I have presented some of the reasons that lead to the unprofessional behaviour of teachers who become militant and start working against the system even though their concerns may be valid and legitimate.

A study by Vimbi (2013) in the Eastern Cape Province schools in South Africa reveals that the relationship between SADTU and school management is conflictual. It appears to be all about the jostling of power amongst the different entities that exist in the school. The study further shows us that the conflict that exists in schools, is partly attributed to the attitudes of the school governing bodies (SGBs), which like unions are also political forums representing the interests of a particular section of stakeholders, being the parents. Mncube (2009) reports that power relations are always key to any agreement to be reached in the management on any organisation like a school. That is why school managers and union members also desire to influence policy because they have the ability to influence. Normally in a situation like this one there will be conflict of interest displayed because at the end of the day it all becomes who has the most power and ability to influence.

Motsohi's (2011) study presents similar findings to us, that unions have a corrosive influence on South African schools. Evidence of this is seen in the way in which SADTU in particular has failed poor communities especially those in the Eastern Cape Province. Education challenges in this province are not something new as Coetzee (2009) argues. Due to this situation, there is a general feeling that unions will need to work in partnership with different stakeholders, including school principals in the implementation of a logical and well-structured form of education management, in order to ensure that there is an improved standard of education in the current poor school practices.

The main issue in this section is the toxic relationship that exists between SADTU and school principals and SGBs. This is mainly because of the conflicting views that each party holds regarding the institution. From this, a conflict of interests is inevitable. Parents have the interests of their children and development of the school community at heart, while unions will be pushing the political agenda, which is self-centred to the needs of the SADTU-affiliated teachers.

## **2.7 Role of teacher trade unions in promoting the Culture of Learning and Teaching**

In this section, I discuss one of the important roles of teacher trade unions, which is the promotion of the Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLT). One of the goals of education is to improve matric results, and the general standard of education. Smith and

Schalekamp (1997) define COLT as the attitude of both teachers and learners towards learning and teaching. A positive COLT according to Lukhwareni (1995) refers to the commitment, willingness, preparedness and determination of teachers to perform their duties. For the learners it means the commitment, preparedness and determination to learn and to be taught. This approach to education can be further taken into looking at the way in which the role of SADTU as a teacher trade union destroys or improves this culture.

Nakpodia (2011) locates the adversaries of COLT in the unfair appointment through the power of unions, of school principals in positions of management and leadership without proper qualifications and relevant experience. Let me take you back to section 2.4 of this chapter; *Teacher Perspectives and Experiences*, it is clearly spelt that young highly qualified teachers with up-to-date knowledge of education management, are often humiliated by principals accusing them of being militant union members who just want to occupy high positions yet they do not have a teaching experience. On the other hand, the principals in question possess no teaching qualification beyond Matric + 3-year degree (Vimbi, 2013). The implication of this is that, some school principals have not updated their qualifications and still are eligible to occupy principalship positions simple because they are the right candidates for the union. This uncondusive environment is likely to breed a lack of effective communication and conflict within the school contributing to a low morale and stress as well as a negative attitude towards teaching (Keil and McConnahan 2006 in Kheswa, *et al.* 2014).

Based on Smith and Schalekamp (1997) definition of COLT above, I am concerned about the number of unqualified and underqualified teachers in schools. Is it possible for SADTU in partnership with the South African Council for Educators (SACE) to fulfil one of their key roles to improve education in South Africa by addressing the issue of such recruitment? Again my other concern is that why does SADTU recruit these teachers in the site leadership to be union members, because the union in my view, should sign up qualified teachers? Is this action not legitimising the alleged claims by NAPTOSA that SADTU is not concerned with teacher professionalism (Mahlangu, 2013)? In answering these questions this study explores ways in which SADTU attempts to improve teacher professionalism in schools.

In creating synergy between teachers and education, effective teaching and learning, the European Trade Union Committee for Education, (ETUCE) in 2004 launched a campaign called “Europe Needs Teachers!” This campaign has served as a relevant platform to draw attention to teacher education at a recommended European Union level. This initiative proves that trade unions representing teachers can also extend their roles to that of improving initial teacher education to ensure high quality pedagogical and professional training of new teachers. Kerchner and Koppich (1993) have argued that a small, but significant, number of teacher unions are beginning to redefine their role in educational reform and restructuring. They argue that these unions have shifted their focus from traditional industrial action concerns to a more prominent focus on professional issues and school improvement. This paradigm shift from conservative ideologies is now replaced by what they call professional unionism. One of the ways in which traditional unionism departs from professional unionism is that unions accept a greater role in the evaluation and assessment of the work of teachers to ensure high standards in education. Examples of teacher trade unions that have shifted focus to professional unionism are almost exclusively limited to the developed world especially the USA, Canada and Britain coupled with limited literature on this topic (Bascia, 1998). If this were the case in developed countries, South Africa as one of the fastest developing countries in the BRICS, would it not this move by teacher trade unions be applicable to her own teacher trade unions? In this study, I sought to establish the possibility and practicability of this shift for SADTU.

Bloch (2009) arguments also resonates with this section. The author’s description of the education landscape is synonymous with a “toxic mix”. He argues that one of the reasons behind the crisis of schooling in South Africa is partly due to the lack of public input and contribution. He further presents a second reason in the list of toxic factors that keep South African schools in a dire state, illiteracy and innumeracy. It is important according to this argument that teacher trade unions are held accountable in carrying out their legislative mandate as guided by the South African Constitution. In the interest of this study, it is important to establish as to who is supposed to be initiating this discourse that Bloch (2009) highly regards as vital yet lacking in our South African education discourse.

Concisely, this section presents that there is paradigm shift in Europe in terms of teacher unions executing their duties for their members. Teacher unions are busying themselves

now with improving their members' access to information. The rationale behind this move is that if they invest on their members, there is going to be a tremendous positive output in terms of teachers focusing on developing themselves and their schools. Moreover, the silence and reluctance that prevails among the public in discussing the destructive role that teacher unions are seem to be posing to education, has to end, and the public has to participate in discussions that speak about teacher unions.

## **2.8 Understanding the role SADTU in influencing teacher promotions**

In this section, I discuss the role played by SADTU in the recruitment process and stages of candidates to occupy senior promotional positions in education. SADTU's position as a key partner in the ruling tripartite alliance has serious ramifications in the appointment of candidates into key positions in schools. According to Nkomfe and Moll (1990), SADTU openly identified with the political agenda of the ANC and educational transformation based on Peoples' Education. On the same note, Hindle (1991) argues that SADTU's ideology is influenced by the politics of its Black members. The suggestion is that SADTU makes no distinction between a strong organisation, which is able to defend and promote the rights and interests of teachers and their professional work, and a political organisation. The Human Science Research Council (HSRC) study on retention and attrition of teachers in the North-west Province in South Africa, reports on incidents of corruption when recruitment and promotion processes for posts of Post Level 2 (PL2) which is a Head of Department (HOD) post and Post Level 3 (PL3) which is a Deputy Principal Post, by teacher trade unions especially SADTU were underway, (Diko & Litseka 2009 in Letseka *et al.* 2012). This report argues that these are not allegations, but eyewitness accounts witnessed behind the scenes, during canvassing by union leaders for their preferred candidate.

The report further says that classified information is leaked to unions' preferred candidates to assist them to glide through the interview process easily. Zengele (2009) argues that the 2009 SADTU teacher strike in the Gauteng Province in South Africa was merely motivated by the decline of the Gauteng Department of Education to promote two SADTU preferred candidates into the position of principalship. It is alleged that one of these two candidates held extensive experience in administration, as a former clerk and two years as a teacher, therefore, he obviously did not meet the requirements. The second

candidate it is claimed that SADTU exercised nepotism, as she was the wife of one of the SADTU principals and yet she possessed no required qualifications as well. We are told that the side-lined candidates had experience and held postgraduate degree in education.

The above report suggests a clear act of corruption in the process of promotion; there are other incidents out there in schools that have not been documented. As a teacher, I also have a similar story to tell regarding a promotional post to PL2 where I had to write a letter and withdraw from an interview. I will elaborate more on this incident in Chapter 4.

Pattillo (2012) brings to light another crucial aspect of unionism in South Africa somehow similar to the report presented above. In a study she conducted in schools in the Umlazi District in Durban South Africa, she uncovered what the World Bank (2010) report calls “quiet corruption” which is described as a wide spectrum of malpractice, which does not necessarily involve monetary exchanges, but results into a failure to deliver adequate and quality teaching and learning. This phenomenon according to this report has negatively affected many schools in South Africa and across the developing countries. These schools face challenges ranging from high failure rate, high rates of tardiness and absenteeism by teachers, which leads to ineffective teaching. While all these malpractices take place, the public expects the unions to create an environment whereby such incidents are eliminated, and if they do, unions are expected to play a role in the identification and disciplining of culprits. It is in light of this report and study that this study seeks to gather evidence that will support such arguments, especially from parents and the DBE officials as one of the key stakeholders in education.

From this section, the issue of corruption emerges. SADTU is accused of selecting their own preferred candidates during recruitment, and that classified information is leaked so that they can pass the interview. This is viewed as corruption by some researchers. Corruption is also presented to us in a form of malpractice, which leads to high failure rates and a decline of COLT, while teachers are salaried in full.

## 2.9 Roles of Teacher Trade Unions Abroad

In this section, I discuss the roles of other teacher trade unions and federations in Europe and North America. The shift by these unions to call for change in education is presented in this study as one of the solutions to some of the challenges that are experienced in our education. Internationally, teacher trade unions are also expected to fulfil certain roles (Carr, 1996). The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) says that unions in the UK, USA, and Canada seldom invest in the development of their members through membership training, even though there is a move by unions to professionalise unionism. This begs the question of, if unions in countries with advanced economies fail to develop their members, how will this be achievable in countries where the economies are still developing, like South Africa? We should however bear in mind that there are small union federations that have changed their approach in this regard. Kerchner and Koppich (1993) have argued that a small, but significant, number of teacher unions are beginning to redefine their role in educational reform and restructuring in the UK, USA and Canada, so it is not all doom and gloom, there are pockets of reform.

In dealing with this challenge, ICFTU has identified a niche to close the gap that exists between information and their members by finding more resources such as money to fund its educational programmes and activities. Since this is a very daunting task, the ICFTU made a call at its second World Conference on Trade Union Education, to reinforce solidarity, build strong and effective unions that can influence society, promote equality, organise, recruit and observe in appointment processes. While there is a positive way forward with ICFTU, in South Africa, teacher recruitment and promotion remains a nightmare. The appointment of majority of school principals in some Black township schools in South Africa remains questionable. This follows headlines in the media alleging that SADTU sells the posts at an exorbitant price (Harper and Masondo, 2014 in Kheswa *et al.* 2014)

From this section, I am bringing up a key issue of a paradigm shift in teacher union activities and the call for education transformation. The literature suggests that, it is possible for teacher trade unions, even those with a strong political background to influence education change.

## **2.10 Theoretical Framework**

Two broad models frame this study: the Transformational Model of Leadership presented by Fullan, Fink and Resnick (2001) in Fullan (2001) and Political Model of Management advocated by Bush (2003).

The Transformational Model is founded on the Transformational Leadership Theory. It is an approach by leaders to effect positive change or transformation, which leads to change in individuals and institutions. In its ideal form, it creates valued and constructive change in those that are led to become leaders themselves. Transformational leadership enhances motivation, morale and performance of the group of followers through a variety of mechanisms (Burns, 1978). In this study, I used the theory to study education transformation versus the role of SADTU in education. Moreover, the theory will be very central to this study because Carson (2011) argues that education and transformation are compatible, while unions merely focus on reforming the political system alone while ignoring the education transformation role. Therefore, through this section, I seek to investigate if SADTU's role is consistent with theories of transformation.

According to Cave and Wilkonson (1990), a school is an organization where different conflicting ideas are often jostling for a platform, which are ultimately expected to coexist. It is from this perspective that conflict is attributed to be one of the causes for the poor management and leadership of schools. Furthermore, a school is a political institution because it is made up of different stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and departmental officials amongst others. All these parties subscribe to conflicting approaches to leadership and management of schools. Therefore, the principal is expected to play a role of reconciling all these parallel interests and improve relations even at the expense of the institution's development. The Political Model is guiding this study to investigate whether the allegations levelled against SADTU, such as being partisan, self-centred, and highly political in nature, non-consultative and non-transformational, do in any way clash with the agenda and interests of the School Governing Body or that of the School Management Team and the principal as a manager of the institution.

The Political Model is premised on the view that conflict between different stakeholders in an organisation is inevitable because by nature an institution that has different role



players will have conflicting ideas, because each and every one of those role players has his/her own interests or agenda to effect. Bush (2003) defines this model from the perspective of its relevancy to resistance to apartheid government pre democratic South Africa. However, Badat (1995) in Bush (2003) argues that politics in an organisation are those constant features of education resistance, which have been termed the politics of opposition. Such stunts have been witnessed in mass mobilisation and mass action by teacher trade unions in South Africa especially, SADTU in pursuit of particular policy objectives. A classic example is that of mass mobilisation of SADTU members by the union to embark on a protest action against the provision that parents should constitute the majority on the School Governing Body is presented by Sayed and Carrim (1997) in Bush (2003). The SGB is not less of a political structure itself, because it protects the interests of a certain section of stakeholders, which is parents. A large scale research conducted in Gauteng Province schools, reports that SGBs in seven of the twenty-nine schools that participated in the protest action, were perceived to be often in open conflict with educators, because they believed that those schools were run ineffectively (Bush and Joubert, 2003).

## **2.11 Conclusion**

In spite of the laudable goals and objectives which education is expected to perform in South Africa, there are various challenges and constraints, which it is confronted with, which sometimes practically, make it impossible for these goals to be realised. The education sector in South Africa, has witnessed many turbulent experiences. These experiences have been characterised by a combination of poor resourced schools, teacher strikes, social ills, and suppression in management of the institutions. In the same vein, Arikewuyo (2004) postulates that the same issues that South African education system experiences, are also evident in the Nigerian university education system. He states that all over the world universities are seen as centres for excellence that not only disseminating knowledge abut also allow knowledge acquisition. Therefore, the role that universities play cannot be ignored. However, in spite of all goals which universities are expected to achieve, they have experienced challenges associated with periodic strikes and student riots, chronic under funding, inadequate facilities and deterioration of physical structure. He further states that effects to solve and ameliorate these challenges have often led to clashes between the government and staff unions. He therefore identifies

a gap between university management at governmental and institutional levels and the roles of staff unions. South African education, (although the study is not focusing on universities) on several occasions has experienced challenges which are similar to those that universities in Nigeria are experiencing. This then brings us to the question that do these experiences affect the way in which teaching and learning are executed in South African schools. If that is the case, how does SADTU respond?

As strikes are evident in the Nigerian university education system, Chisholm (1999) on the same pulse argues that in South Africa, teacher unions and industrial action define the schooling landscape. She further provides us with a background for industrial action in South Africa. She attributes it to a history of subjugation of non-white teachers who were oppressed by the Apartheid system, resulting to teacher resistance to injustice. However, we continue to see even most intensive industrial strike action or ‘work to rule’ behaviour even in post-apartheid era. Out of the two powerful teacher unions, SADTU has been the most blamed teacher union for disrupting functionality of the schooling system.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I address and justify the research design and methodology of the study. I seek to achieve this by first describing and explaining the paradigm in which the study was conducted. Secondly, I describe and explain the research design. Lastly, I describe the methodology of the study. The methodology encompasses the procedure applied in gaining entry to the schools and the data generation instruments that I used. Lastly, I will delve into how data was analysed. The final aspect describes how I have addressed the ethical issues, trustworthiness and limitations of this study.

#### **3.2 The Interpretivist Paradigm**

A paradigm is a view about the world. It encompasses a disciplinary background of ideas, practices and beliefs in which a researcher is operating (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). Significantly important to the interpretivist paradigm, is the effort to advance an understanding of an individual's views and experience by the researcher (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Interpretivist tend to focus on the behaviour and actions of the people who are occupying the central idea being studied at that time (Cohen, *et al.*, and Maree, 2007). This approach in viewing the universe, allows interpretivists researchers to understand how individuals in everyday life construct meaning and explain the events of their setting (Creswell, 2005).

This study is located in the interpretivist paradigm. This was suitable to guide my search to understand participants' experiences and perspectives on SADTU's role in education. Through this process, I learn from their lived experiences. Through this lens, I was able to interact closely with the participants to gain insight and form a clear understanding as to how SADTU is expected and viewed to be fulfilling its role in education. Furthermore, I was able to develop a holistic picture of the participants' views within their contexts and positions in the field of education. Concisely, the interpretivist paradigm allowed the study to move

towards the direction where by the participants were able to inform it, and is reflective of how the participants make sense of their experiences.

### **3.3 The Research Design**

The success of any research is guided and determined by the type of approach the researcher applies. I required a plan to proceed in determining the nature of the relationship between variables (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995). To achieve this, I adopted a multi-site case study research design. A case study is a natural enquiry that investigates a specific phenomenon or occurrence within its real life setting (Cohen et al. 2000, Cohen et al. 2007, Cohen *et al.* 2011 and Yin, 1994). A case study has three essential parts, which are the unit of analysis, the research process, and the end product (Stake, 1995 Yin and 1994). In this study, the unit of analysis was the experiences and perspectives of key stakeholders regarding the role of SADTU in education in South Africa. Merriam (1998) argues that a case is a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries. This description by Merriam (1998) propelled me to adopt this design and unearth content that could not have been obvious if I had employed any other research design. This is so because according to Henning *et al.* (2004); case studies provide opportunities for detailed discoveries.

Through a qualitative case study guided within the interpretivist paradigm, I was able to generate first-hand knowledge of the “social life unfiltered through concepts, operational demotions and rating scales” (White, 2005 p. 87). This approach assisted me in trying to learn and appreciate what teachers, union leaders, principals and DOE officials understood and to be the role of SADTU in education in South Africa. Qualitative research has very distinguishable characteristics that assisted me to understand how participants perceived their contexts because I interacted with them in their everyday experiences. I listened to them, and I could interpret their thoughts suggested and implied in the context of this study.

Through this approach, I was able to generate data mainly from spoken sources, although I did observe behaviour and reactions during the interviews as well as during SADTU meetings at school or branch level, because I am also a teacher and a SADTU member. The data I generated would not have been as wealthy as it is if I only relied on analysing and

interpreting documents. I was able to understand how participants view the role of SADTU to be in education, and how they presented their expectations and experiences in this regard. Therefore, qualitative research guided me to investigate the rich and complex behaviour of participants.

### **3.4 Participants**

I purposively selected three schools based on the commonalities in terms demographics of SADTU. This means that, all the three schools have high numbers of SADTU members who are Black teachers. The three schools are all located in the same township and are easily accessible and one of them being my work centre. Through observation and informal discussions with colleagues, and my school having a SADTU branch chairperson, I realised that there was a large SADTU presence at my school and in the other sampled schools. Moreover, my school is often used as a centre for the three schools if there are urgent SADTU meetings or announcements.

In each of the schools I interviewed, the principals, deputy principal, a focus group made up of two teachers, individual teachers, whom among them were SADTU site stewards and a branch chairperson. I considered these participants as highly likely to be knowledgeable about the topic of the study because they were the key stakeholders in education who are daily exposed to the activities of the union in their schools, which is one of the reasons that informed my choice. I also interviewed the School Governing Body (SGB) chairperson. The reason being that parents are often at the receiving end for any action that teacher unions take. Moreover, the Theoretical Framework of this study claims that often there are clashes between parents and SADTU in schools because of conflicting agendas, which each group possess. Moreover, the SGB member has been a member of the SGB for a long time, and has experience in presiding over misconduct cases of teachers in one of the sampled schools. MacMillan and Schumacher (1997) argue that, in purposive sampling, samples are chosen because participants are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon under investigation, which is the case for this study. I also went outside of the school and interviewed the Curriculum Education Specialist, whom I asked to share with me his views and experiences as a representative of the Department of Education managing four circuits,

regarding the role of SADTU in transforming education in the sampled schools that belong under his circuits.

### **3.5 Data generation instruments**

Data generation is a process of producing data. I adopted three such instruments, namely face- to-face individual interviews, focus group interview and document analysis. I used the latter instrument to complement the oral sources (Mouton, 2001). I reviewed the following documents: the Constitution of SADTU (2014), Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), SADTU Vision 2030, the South African Council of Educators' Code of Conduct and other policy documents. As a teacher and a SADTU member, where applicable, I also drew from anecdotal evidence out of experience.

#### **3.5.1 Interviews**

An interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions (Nieuwenhuis, 2008). It is a direct method of generating data in the form of information from a participant. Significant information is effectively obtained from an individual through an interview (Merriam, 1998). According to De Vos, *et al.* (2002) an interview is a face-to-face interaction between an interviewer and interviewee (participants), with the purpose of understanding the interviewee's life experiences as expressed in his or her own words.

I used interviews to individually converse with teachers whom I had initially meant to interview as a group but could not due to their reluctance to be interviewed that way. Therefore, I had to revert to individual interviews with an exception of one focus group. I had to settle for that situation because I was conducting the interviews during a very busy time of the year. Most teachers were invigilating exams, and could not converge at the same time for the interview I suspect that the reasons behind this was that, teachers feared what colleagues would think of them, if they revealed how they felt about SADTU, especially if it were negative views and experiences. This could have led to victimisation for betraying the union as well. Overall, each piece of information that I obtained from each interviewee has its own unique flavour. Even

though there were similarities in what was being said, however, each one of the participants had his or her own sentiments about the union.

Interviews are best able to capture unique experiences that participants share during an up and close interaction. They enable the study to capture thoughts and, how the participants present them. Moreover, interviews assist the researcher understand the way in which participants of the study perceive the world, and how they interpret what happens around them in their point of view (Cohen, *et al.* 2007).

Before the actual day of the interview, I gave the participants questions in preparation for the face-to-face interview. The type of questions that I designed, were open-ended questions, guiding the participants to respond as much as possible, providing detailed information based on the question, and allowing the interviewer to probe the participant for more information. Open-ended questions lead to other questions that the interviewer might have not thought of at the time of preparation (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2004).

In total, I interviewed ten (10) participants comprising of eight (8) teachers, one (1) School Governing Body Deputy Chairperson and the Curriculum Education Specialist. I only had one session with each participant. I would have liked more sessions with some of them, because I felt that they held back in terms of responding, I thought that maybe a second time around would ease them up, however, some of them were very busy with examinations. On average, each interview was about sixty (60) minutes long, however, with some participants I was carried away, and lasted about two (2) hours.

### 3.5.2 Document Analysis

In addition to interviews, I also analysed documents as I reported above. The reasons for this was to investigate how parents viewed the decline in results in relation to union activities in the school. I also reviewed the Constitution of SADTU because I

sought to investigate if there were any gaps between what it contained and the reality of SADTU's presence in the sampled schools. However, most importantly I sought to investigate the limitations of the right to protest by trade unions versus the right to education. The SACE Code of Conduct for Educators was another document that I analysed to investigate what SACE says about teacher professionalism, which is one of the key themes or topics that emerged in Chapter 2. Another document was the SADTU Vision 2030. This document presents the visions of the union. I studied them to investigate if the role of SADTU according to the document were consistent with the views and experiences of participants. This analysis provided an in depth internal view of how SADTU was viewed. There was no particular order in which I analysed each of the above documents.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

After I had generated data, the next step was to analyse it. McMillan and Schumacher (1993) and McMillan and Schumacher (1997) argue that qualitative research integrates the process of organising, analysing, and interpreting data. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) expand this argument by viewing data analysis as a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the information that the researcher would have generated. For purposes of this study, data was organized in three stages:

#### **3.6.1 During data generation**

While I was interviewing the participants or engaging with the other instruments, I made notes on proceedings. At the end of each interview session, I would scrutinise the data, write summaries of the issues and meanings that emerged during the interview session. These issues assisted in re-shaping the next interview or other session in light of the learning gained.

#### **3.6.2 Data reduction.**

Data reduction is a strict selection, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transformation of data, that is in a form of field notes (Cresswell, 1994). I fine-tuned



themes that emerged from the interview and other sessions so that they became meaningful. In other words, I looked for patterns in the data.

### 3.6.3 Data categorisation

Finally, I categorised data according to the research question. This enabled me to be able to tell that all the questions were addressed. Researchers can also generate data that goes beyond addressing the research question; she/he might also want to categorise it properly, because data generation is not limited by the research question. Concisely, data is generally interactive, moving from a more general to a more specific observation (Creswell, 1998). According to Silverman (2000), data analysis may begin informally during interviews and continue during transcription when recurring themes, patterns and categories are occurring. I adopted this approach as well.

## 3.7 Ethical Considerations

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997), ethics generally refer to the idea that something is good or bad, right or wrong and proper or improper. Therefore, I had to adhere to ethical considerations by obtained permission from school gatekeepers and obtaining ethical clearance from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, before beginning the research. Moreover, permission was sought from the three school principals where the study was conducted. I obtained informed consent from all. I assured them that their privacy and sensitivity is going to be protected, as some of them did raise concerns of their interviews being used against them in future. That is why I have used pseudonyms for each participant and school to ensure anonymity.

## 3.8 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a way in which the researcher is able to persuade the reader that the findings in the study can be trusted and that there are of a high standard (Johnson and Turner, 2003). In qualitative research, trustworthiness minimises biasness and errors. Therefore, I

used more than one data generation tool and combination of these has brought trustworthiness. To ensure trustworthiness, I have also included direct quotes in the presentation and discussion of data in Chapter Four.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

The research design and methodology employed in this study have been justified parallel to the methods of data collection as well as strategies used in data analysis. This chapter informs the findings of this study that are being discussed in Chapter Four.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present and discuss the findings that I arrived at through data generated from participants from three different schools: one secondary and two primary schools all located in the same Township. Further to participants in the schools, I interviewed a Curriculum Education Specialist (CES) and one SGB members. I have used pseudonyms for both the schools and participants. The identification of participants is indicated in Table 1:

**Table 1: Schools and participants labelling**

Number	Schools and Participants	Pseudonyms
1.	Umngeni Secondary School	USS
	Umngeni Deputy Principal	UDP
	Umngeni SGB Deputy Chairperson	USGBDC
	Umngeni Educator 1/ SADTU Site steward	UED1/USADTUSS
	Umngeni Educator 2	UED2
	Umngeni Educator 3	UED3
	Umngeni Educator 4/ SADTU Branch Chairperson	UED4/SADTUBC
2.	Vulindlela Primary School	VPS
	Vulindlela Primary School Principal	VPSP
	Vulindlela Focus Group	VFG
3	Pietermaritzburg Primary School	PMBPS
	Pietermaritzburg Primary School Principal	PMBPSP
4	Umngeni Circuit Curriculum Education Specialist	UCES

I had planned interview three teacher focus groups, three SGB chairpersons, three principals, three SADTU Site Stewards and the SEM, however, two potential teacher focus groups from two schools were reluctant to be interviewed as a group, they preferred to be interviewed individually. There was never a time where I could find them all together. Every time I made an appointment to interview they each agreed on the time, but when the time came, they would each cite reasons for not being able to come to the interview. Therefore, because I suspected that there could be a possibility that they did not want to speak about their views in front of their colleagues, so I eventually interviewed them individually, except for the Vulindlela group.

The findings that I present were analysed using a school- by- school format. The final list of interviews stands as follows: two school principals and one deputy principal, two plain teachers, SGB chairpersons, one focus group two SADTU leadership representatives at a school and one at branch level. Vulindlela and Pietermaritzburg Primary Schools, share the same SGB Chairperson. I arranged to interview him, but when the time came, he gave an excuse of being busy with exams, as he was studying with UNISA. I had planned to interview Umngeni Secondary School Principal individually, because as he was granting me the permission to conduct interviews in the school, he made it clear that he will not participate, because the topic of my study was controversial, so he declined. That is the reason why I had to interview his deputy.

At Vulindlela Primary School, even though the focus group was not made up of between four and twelve participants but I still treated them as one. I must say that I really enjoyed interviewing the Vulindlela group, although the site steward gave me a hard time. He was very difficult. However, interviewing a focus group gave me a new perspective on the behaviour of people when they are presenting their views in the presence of a colleague. The mood was not tense, it was relaxed, and I felt like a moderator of the session. Sometimes, I just sat there and watched the two participants posing questions to each other. I realised that even though the site steward has a senior position in the site leadership, but the other participant could challenge him, because of her age. Most of the teachers that could have formed part of the focus group were busy with invigilation of end of year examinations.

The site steward at Vulindlela Primary School spoke at the level of a SADTU site steward and as a teacher, which is the same case for Umngeni Secondary School, where the SADTU Site Steward and the SADTU Branch Chairperson wore two hats. In the case of the SEM, I experienced a challenge, because he declined to be interviewed as well. He reported that he did not have a large scope of content based on the topic of the study, instead I should interview people more senior than him such as the District Director or the Curriculum Education Specialist, whom the SEM directly reports to. This was not a problem for me, the only problem was that the CES could have declined as well, but after sitting down with him, and explaining the purpose of my study, he agreed to be interviewed.

I present the findings in accordance with the themes that emerged from the data analysis process. I was able to deduce from all the nine interviews four clear-cut themes. The chapter unfolds through the following themes:

- The ability of SADTU to influence decisions
- Gaps that exist between SADTU's policy and stakeholders' experiences and views
- SADTU's role in educational change and development
- The role of SADTU in developing teacher professionalism
- Emerging issues

## **4.2 Background information of the participants**

In this section, I present background information of different participants from the three schools as well as the CES for Umngeni Circuit.

**Table 2: Participants gender and experience in their different portfolios**

<b>School Number</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Participants and Position</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Experience in years in SADTU</b>	<b>Experience in years' in teaching</b>	<b>Experience in years in SGB</b>
1	Umngeni Secondary	Deputy Principal	Male	20+	20+	
	Umngeni Secondary	SADTU Site/Educator 1	Male	2	10	
	Umngeni Secondary	Educator 2	Female	1	8	
	Umngeni Secondary	SADTU /Educator 4	Male	4	2	
	Umngeni Secondary	Deputy SGB	Male			5+
	Vulindlela Primary	Principal	Female	None	17	
	Vulindlela Primary	Educator 1	Female	15	15+	
2	Vulindlela Primary	Educator/SADTU site	Male	19	35	
	Pietermaritzburg	Principal	Female	26	35	
3	Umngeni Circuit	CES	Male	19+	19+	

The emerging key issue from this section is that the majority of participants are males and they are in leadership positions of SADTU at different structures. This tells me that SADTU in the three schools was represented by males with sufficient experience to bring effect changes that can improve or collapse the education system.

#### **4.3 The ability of SADTU to influence decisions**

In this section, I discuss the responses regarding the ability of SADTU to influence decisions in education. There is an assertion that SADTU has more power and influence than the other teacher unions in South Africa to influence the Department of Basic Education. This ability is attributed to the motivation behind the formation of SADTU and its launch in 1990 October, 9 in Johannesburg. At Umngeni Secondary School with its wealth in having a SADTU Branch Chairperson as a well as a site steward, made it even more easier for me, to generate

data that has actually shown me that SADTU is indeed powerful in schools. The SADTU Branch Chairperson, who is also Educator 4 (SADTUBC/UED4) that I interviewed, addressed this theme by introducing me to his roles and duties as the chairperson of the branch:

As the Chairperson of SADTU in the branch, I have various roles to play. I have a political mandate, I organise meetings, I represent members, I sit in dispute meetings, and I participate in different structures of the union, such as REC (Regional Executive Committee) and the PGC (Provincial General Council). I also sit at Provincial level.

This response was too superficial for me, I was not convinced, so I wanted to know what he meant by a political mandate. In his response, I picked up that as the chairperson he also sits in the African National Congress (ANC) structures through the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). In the document review I had with the South African Democratic teachers' Union Constitution document SADTU Constitution as Amended in (2014, p.1), parts of the background states that SADTU hold the following ideology:

The idea to form a national and non-racial teachers' union originated at a conference of teachers in Harare in April 1988. The various organisations present at the Harare Conference - ATASA, UTASA, TASA, NEUSA, DETU, WECTU, EDASA, PTU and the PTL committed themselves to work towards the establishment of one national teachers' organisation in a "unitary, non-racial and democratic South Africa". These "Harare Accord" organisations formed the National Teacher Unity Forum (NTUF) under the convenorship of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and initiated a process of building one organisation out of the many, which existed.

This study is unearthing very critical information around the topic of politics and SADTU. Throughout the interviews, this topic was avoided in some cases; the union was strongly defended, when I put forward allegations regarding the political nature of SADTU. Therefore, the extracts below are a testimony that the existence of SADTU is mainly driven

by political inclinations. I also posed a similar question to the Umngeni Curriculum Education Specialist (UCES), to explain on his capacity as an overseer of four circuits, the role and function of SADTU at a school level.

SADTU has a very broad scope; it is the biggest teacher union in the country. It represents its members, develops teachers in many areas of life, culture, sport and academics. It is not like other teacher unions like NAPTOSA who solely focus on teacher development in the classroom.

When I further probed him to explain what made SADTU unique and possess so much membership, he chuckled, and from that reaction, I knew that his response would not be much different from the rest of the other participants. His responses in totality, even though I can say that he was very wise in responding, but he was able to give away the intentions of SADTU in a very subtle way. He said:

There was a need for Black people, especially Black teachers to be liberated politically first. It was important to form an organisation that was going to look after the interests of Black teachers.

The responses from the SADTUBC/UED4 and UCES demonstrates a point of intersection that the formation of SADTU was mainly to defend the rights of teachers, but interestingly, it was revealed in these two interviews specifically that the militancy that exists in many SADTU members is due to the history behind the formation of SADTU. Even though both participants did not overtly acknowledge that SADTU is militant in nature, which is one of its characteristics that makes it difficult for parents and some teachers to trust it when it comes to the education of learners and professional development of teachers.

The UCES asked me if I knew where SADTU was formed. I told him that it was formed in Harare. He then told me that the reasons behind that, was because all the Black Teacher Organisations that made up SADTU were not allowed in the country because they discussed



political liberation and the education system in the country, so the White Government would not have allowed it. It is from that history that even today, SADTU had not abandoned the militant style of doing its business. It was interesting also to find out that both participants emphasised that SADTU is the biggest teacher union in the country. The UED4/SADTUBC said:

SADTU is recruiting teachers and the support staff in schools as well as office based staff in the Department of Education. The reasons for this, for an example our sister union, NEHAWU, even has security guards under their wings, but a security guard at a school, will have unique challenges compared to a security guard working at a hospital. As SADTU representatives, we have advised schools to have security guards because in cases where there are no guards in a school, we find ourselves as a union called to discuss problems related to security in that school. Therefore, it is important for SADTU to extend its arm as well to the non-teaching staff.

I was curious to know from this response if the recruitment strategy of SADTU was not based on increasing membership so that it can have a strong voice, and in the response that I received from the participant, according to him, that was not the reason but it works for the union. On the other hand, the UCES shared the same sentiments, that in platforms where SADTU and other teacher unions sit with the employer, which is the government, whether at bargaining councils or negotiating salaries and other terms of employment for educators, SADTU emerged as the most influential one because of high representation in those platforms because of the big numbers in membership. This deputy principal's response below is a clear indication that indeed there is power in numbers:

I think there is strength and unity in numbers and that is one of primary reasons why...in terms of the elections... and... whenever it comes to elections you need to win the elections. So you need to have a strength in numbers, but I think the fact that you are in a teacher organisation should not shy that you are being part of the...government of the day, you don't have to agree entirely with all what the government is doing. But in principle, if you have a value system, and the same

mission and vision for this country, then the alliance will be I think a necessary one. Because it is better to negotiate with someone that you know rather than with someone in opposition... and being at loggerheads with each other although it can create conflict in some instances as well.

This ability to influence by SADTU has been seen recently when the Post Provisioning Norms (PPN) has been challenged by SADTU forcing government through the Circuit Task Teams and the District Task Teams to put on hold the moving and placing of teachers, due to a decrease in enrolment. Most teachers even those that are not SADTU members have applauded this action by SADTU because it is an inconvenience to most teachers. The UCES mentioned that naturally people do not embrace change easily, being placed in another school with a totally new environment, comes with a lot of adjustment. This is what he had to say:

SADTU has identified a loop hole in the policies regarding the PPN, the agreement between unions and the employer, was that the PPN will be effective after three years, so teachers can't be moved around until the three-year circle is over.

While this may be seen as a good move by SADTU, parents through the voice of the SGB feel that teachers are too complacent, they get used to the corruption and the lack of work ethic in their schools, and then they start resisting change, and this is found amongst SADTU teachers, so this war against PPN is fought to defend SADTU members who are lazy. I was keen to know from the UCES, as the representative of the Department of Education, if this action by SADTU was legit. Without any waste of time, he agreed that indeed this time SADTU's concerns are founded because the issue of learner enrolment in schools cannot be controlled by schools, so it is not their fault that the learners have dropped out.

A Secretarial Report compiled at a National Congress, on the 12th – 13th April 2016, gave birth to a document entitled SADTU's positions on education matters post the ANC's alliance education summit. This document states that there are many issues that are highlighted to the public that could not find consensus or be expressed at plenary with the

SADTU's alliances and thus for various reasons required to be further engaged with the alliance partners particularly those that are involved in the education sector. The above matter of PPN was one of them. However, the issues of placing teachers in schools is not as superficial as it appears in schools, where teachers are normally told of the principle of last in first out (LIFO) that it will apply when there is a decline in learner enrolment. In this document, it shows that the placement of teachers goes hand in hand with the distribution of resources in schools, and SADTU says that, often schools that are poorly resourced are discriminated by the PPN. This is the claim that SADTU makes:

There is a provision in the new model to hold back posts from schools with insufficient classrooms to accommodate all the teachers. The argument is that giving more teachers than the number of classrooms available is an inefficient use of resources, since the excess teachers will just be sitting around taking free periods. In other words, a school – which on student numbers (and other criteria) is entitled to say 12 educators, but only, has 8 classrooms – such a school would only receive 8 posts, and the other posts would be held back and used elsewhere until the school had received the additional classrooms.

SADTU is asserting that the above proposal by the DBE has caused a great worry as it appears that the model is chastising schools which are already under-resourced, in order to make financial savings. This model according to SADTU manifests specific concerns such as:

- Not confronting the key problem of overcrowding and infrastructure logjam. The aim of the approach should be to fast-track the building of classrooms/schools, not reduce the number of teachers because this will further increase class sizes.
- This approach could also have a bearing on the categorisation of schools, leading to down-grading.

Therefore, SADTU has presented a creative solution to the government to deal with the crisis of excess teachers in under resourced schools in terms of classroom availability.

The creative alternative to the DoE's penny-pinching approach surely would be to develop strategies for improving delivery in situations of physical constraints using the full staff compliment – e.g. group work, multi-grade teaching strategies, some kind of shift system – as short-term strategies until proper physical infrastructure is in place.

The above extracts from this document assisted me to establish if SADTU indeed had the power to influence government. Now, the question is how is this possible? Are the other teacher unions able to do the same? I sought to determine whether these other unions such as NATU and NAPTOSA (second biggest from SADTU) also have the same ability and strength as SADTU when it comes to persuading the government. The CES said:

In these few years as the CES, engaging with teacher unions in various issues, ranging from disputes and disciplinary issues, I can say that I don't know more about NAPTOSA because as a former principal myself, I have interacted mostly with SADTU members and one NATU member at my former school. But now, I can say that, based on interactions during meetings, SADTU is very strong and vibrant; you can even see it in the way that they interpret policy. If you have noticed, the little girl ANA has been assassinated in schools. There is no ANA anymore. SADTU has successfully been able to discontinue ANA from taking place in schools. You see ANA and teacher unions agreed that it will be a diagnostic tool for over a period of years, but now, the government is not sticking to the end of the agreement, ANA has been administered every term and every year, becoming an extra burden to the teachers, yet already, the work of the teachers is just too much.

The issue of ANA (Annual National Assessment) is one of those issues that were nagging at the back of my mind during each interview, even the members of the SGB were victims of this question, even though they showed less or no knowledge at all. ANA as a diagnostic tool, has been discontinued in schools, no school is allowed to administer ANA anymore. So this discontinuation of ANA has been criticised and yet supported by different people, SADTU is

being praised for this, while others feel that SADTU made a wrong move. I will talk more on ANA in the following sections, because it is also addressed in the other themes. However, it is important to bring it up here in this section too because it shows the reader the extent at which SADTU's influence can go in terms of influencing policy. It is even interesting to mention that the UCES mentioned while chuckling again, that the decision of SADTU to stop the administering of ANA was a unanimous decision with the other teacher unions. Even though there are disagreements between the three big teacher unions, but this time, they all agreed in one voice, but he emphasised that this was an effort by SADTU that benefitted all the teachers regardless of union affiliation.

The above claim also came up from the two group participants of Vulindlela Primary School. Still on the same theme of the ability to influence by SADTU, both the site steward and the other educator, put it boldly that all the unions shared the same sentiments regarding the suspension of the administering of ANA in schools. A name of the Deputy President for NATU, Mr. Thompson was one of the names that were mentioned in the interview, who is one of the leaders of other teacher unions who opposed the presence of ANA in schools.

The Deputy Principal of Umngeni Secondary School had something to say regarding the ability of SADTU to influence decisions, although he did not put it as boldly as the UCES, but I could tell that that is what he implied:

In that, I think when we look at that I think we need to look at perspective. You look at the composition of NEPTOSA is predominantly Whites educators, Coloureds educators, and a percentage of Indians educators. And when you look at politically, when you look at the ambitions of NEPTOSA they are not necessarily aligned with the government as such. So in that respect, that is one of the major difference between NEPTOSA and SADTU. And again this is my opinion, I feel that NEPTOSA is leaning towards the Democratic Alliance [DA] in terms of the...the manner which they conduct their business. When you look at SADTU on the other hand, is probably 95% of the opposition of SADTU is black South Africans. And essentially, it is more African while that any other there is group. So in terms of the oppositions, and when

you look at SADTU is aligned with the government of the day and that to promulgate the policies of the government of the day. When you look at NEPTOSA on the other hand, even if some policy is implemented, we always at a logger heads with the government because of the inclination towards the other political parties, so the difference and the gap between SADTU and NEPTOSA is in political landscape of this country.

Out of all the participants, I find the responses of parents as represented by the SGB Deputy Chairperson very honest, unlike some of the responses especially from the CES and the SADTU Branch Chairperson. They were beating about the bush most of the time, instead of being direct, they used a lot of inference, so most of the time, when I spoke to them, and I had to ask the same question in many different ways. Sometimes, I was able to get the implication, but mostly I had to assume and read between the lines, or even coin my own interpretations, which turned out to be true for example that SADTU is very powerful, it focuses more on defending their member teachers who have offended. In the following extract, the SGBDC is concurring with some of the implications that I was able to deduce:

Let me say, in our country now we are governed by politics, government cannot do much because politics is there. So when these things of unions started, started because of politicians, and high authorities of SADTU you would find that there are roles that they play in the ANC, and from the ANC they've got impact to the government. So as much as our government governs us, but government cannot do a lot, they serve; they also listen to the politics.

I wanted to confirm if I had heard him correctly, so I asked if there was a place of politics in our education system, because he had made a claim that the unionists are politicians. So if they were as he put it, are they influencing the decision that are being taken by the government with regard to education reforms in South Africa? If so, what effect does it have in education, what is the implication of that in our education system? This is what he said:

You know government... let me say Department of Education is there to serve children. That's why when there is a teacher who is maybe is accused by having a sexual relationship with a child, that case is non – negotiable. If there are facts, that teacher would be dismissed. But if that teacher is a member of SADTU, they would make sure that SADTU high authority makes sure that they influence the decision of the department. I have seen cases like that in my experience as an SGB, where you will see that this is clear....

From the above extract, the key point that emerges according to the SGBDC's experiences, is that as a representative of school government he does not see the SGB having the ability and power to implement its own agenda and oppose decisions that they regard to be detrimental to the education of their children, except on paper, practically, this suggests that they do not have the power to influence decision making especially when it involves SADTU teachers.

Yes, we are there to serve the interest of the learners .... You know some teachers have a belief that... yah the SGB doesn't have much power than SADTU. As much as we are given the power to govern the school but in instance... in the cases that I been involved with, SGB didn't have much support from the school per say from the teachers... because funny enough, if I can quote, the person that was accused of having a sexual relationship with the children is a well – known person that for sure he has done such things that he was accused with. But there was a question that I asked from the rest of the teachers during a meeting, between teachers and the government body. I said to them, in the case like this where the teacher has been accused having sexual relationship with the children, with a minor! What are you saying as the teachers? One teacher who is the member of the union said... who was supported by a member of NATU said, we will support our member, our comrade, our colleagues, because these things are just accusations, a person is guilty once its proven that the person is guilty. So in a case of a child, who is supporting a child as a teacher, so for me, with that outcome of the meeting, I have learnt that as much as parents are trying to bring justice to the school, but the school is corrupt because of these politics that are happening, and funny enough the teacher was suspended from school for a couple of months while the case was being busy with, and to my surprise

he was re-instated back at school, the principal said us that he received a letter that came with the teacher, which said that he is starting now, so my question is whoever was doing the investigation and everything, did he/she come to the parents and other children, because if you ask people who were taught by this teacher years ago, they believe that he did it, because it's in his veins now.

In this section different views have emerged which all suggest (overtly or covertly) that indeed SADTU is presented in the study as a very powerful teacher trade union that has a huge muscle to engage stakeholders especially the employer in the process of decision making, but most importantly, the union has influence in terms of the implementation of those decisions. This ability comes from the association that SADTU has with the ruling party, and the large number of membership compared to other teacher unions in South Africa. This notion is consistent with the Theoretical Framework discussed in Chapter 2. SADTU's behaviour according to the participants is typical of trade union's lack of a transformational agenda outlook to education, but instead, they busy themselves with teacher job security, and political campaigns. Another aspect of the Theoretical Framework that is consistent with this section is that SGB and SADTU jostle for power in schools because each one of them, possess a different agenda towards education.

#### **4.4 Gaps existing between SADTU's policy and stakeholders' experiences and views**

One of the key findings of this study was that there seemed to be a wide gap between what parents and some teachers expect SADTU to do in education and what SADTU was actually doing. There is a suggestion that key stakeholders in education have different views and experiences regarding the role of SADTU in schools, yet the SADTU document review paints the union in a different light. The Democratic Teachers Union of South Africa is mandated by its constitution in the objectives clause, Clause 6.9 to encourage the development of aesthetic aspects of the learner's life and to help promote his or her educational spirit and physical development. Moreover, the South African Council of Educators (SACE) Educator Code of Conduct, states that an educator must commit to their duties and be professional all the time. However, literature view in empirical studies such as that conducted by Motsahi (2001), discusses the lack of visible professionalism especially in those schools where teacher demographics are mostly SADTU members and generally labelled as dysfunctional. On the



other hand, Chisholm and Vally's (1999) classification of teachers and learners according to how each group embraces the Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLT) presents another deficiency in what is SADTU is expected to do in improving COLT.

It is against this backdrop that this section aims to highlight concerns and expectations from the key stakeholders emanating from what SADTU's policy and vision says, and what is really happening in education. This aspect of the study is articulated in the statement of the problem in Chapter One, and through the interviews conducted with the participants, the reader will have a better understanding of the sources of disillusionment that exist within the stakeholders especially parents, as represented by the SGB.

At the end of the interview with the Umngeni Education Specialist (UCES), he asked me what would happen after this study has been completed. I told him that my study wishes to identify and close the gaps in literature related to the study's title, as well as address the gaps that exist between expectations and reality because of the activities of SADTU in schools, since there is a general feeling of unhappiness amongst some stakeholders. My response made him even change the posture at which he sat, and I could see that he was serious. This felt like it was the beginning of the interview. He said:

There are a lot of gaps that exist in the education system generally, I don't want to lie. You see, now there are meetings that we hold every week because of the PPN, you are aware of it? Yes. SADTU is up in arms because the employer has breached the agreement that exist between the two. There is an agreement that teachers will not move for a period of three years. Now this aspect of the PPN has not been amended in the SASA document [South African Schools Act]. You see, our policies in the Department, have loopholes, and SADTU is capitalising on them.

While the UCES was passionately expressing his concerns on the gaps in knowledge that exist in between the structures of SADTU, after telling him that one of the reasons why I found it important to interview a DoE representative, was because some of the input I

received amongst the different leaders SADTU had gaps and in one of the points put forward I noticed that there were contradictions in the way in which they responded, it was obvious from his facial expression that indeed there were concerns with the way in which information was handled within the union.

You know what; there is a big gap in terms of information transfer amongst SADTU leadership, even members. Even yourself, you are not going to get much from site stewards regarding this topic. You were supposed to go to the office of the National Negotiator; she was going to give you relevant information.

This shortcoming in the way in which SADTU is expected to handle information, for me is a major concern as a member who pays membership, with a certain set of expectations from the union. It further suggests that members, especially teachers are given a raw deal because, what I have picked up to be the gist of the UCES input, is that SADTU is able to interpret and interact with policy well compared to other teacher unions, and if that is the case, is SADTU assisting its members to engage with policy as well? Then how does that happen, with incompetent or with leaders that lack knowledge as the UCES puts it. At a school level, there are many teachers; (I am talking about this from experience) who do not have the skill to interact with policies, and documents from either the Department of Education, or school policies. So if the gap that the UCES is talking about is real (which I believe, because he has a lot of experience as a SADTU member and working at different senior positions for the Department of Education), then that leaves SADTU members with a deficit in knowledge and empowerment in areas of information acquisition:

I do not know what the Constitution of SADTU says regarding that. I have not checked it.

SADTU Vision 2030 is another document of the union that expresses the visions and aims of the union, even better because it has a time frame. From this document, I gathered that SADTU recognised that there were external forces that could not be left out in the union's operational terrain to transform education in South Africa. In Clause 6 of Vision 2030, titled

The Motive Forces, parents are one of those factors that have an inevitable ability to influence the processes of the union:

...the parent as a primary unit of households and therefore key to the determination of all manner of social strata and class has a definitive influence on the governance of the schooling environment. The strategic position of teachers as parents of society, when society is engaged in other productive activities, makes them a natural ally of this motive force. The need therefore to create strategic alliances with the parent constituency creates influence distribution opportunities that can be beneficial to the broader transformation imperatives of SADTU.

I then posed the question to the participants especially the leaders of SADTU on the position of the union regarding parental involvement in the union's policies in the process to effect change in education in light of the above statement. The same question was posed to the Umngeni Secondary School SGB Deputy Chairperson, USGBC and I received different opposing views regarding this issue notably from the SADTU leaders. The site steward for Umngeni Secondary School/Educator 1, had this to say:

We as SADTU members we appreciate the involvement of the parents in the education matters, since the parents are from a very big stakeholder in our education. So everything that is happening parental involvement is needed, otherwise if we not involve parents in our education than I won't think the education would run smoothly. Therefore, even the SGBs and staff so that we relate anything that has to do with parents in meeting their children in the school.

On the other hand, the group participants from Vulindlela Primary School seemed to avoid this question, but rather, whether unintentionally or deliberately decided to coin their own question that they gave an answer to:

You mean conflict between unions and SGB. No, it depends from school to school. Here at our school we honestly don't remember any incidents of clashes between our SGB and teachers, because I remember when the process of interviews to recruit principals in schools was administered by SGB was introduced, I remember, the then SGB chairperson would instruct the acting principal not to be present in certain meetings that the SGB held with us, because they wanted to know if we were happy with the principal, of course they saw that we were working, but it also wanted to know if we were happy, were we still willing to continue working with that principal before going to the interview, because the aim here was to make sure that the school management did not collapse. Of course sometimes, it is misinformed with some incidents that take place in the classrooms for instance, but we are lucky because the parents are willing to sit down with us as teachers and discuss issues. This is because that they understand that teachers spend most of the time with their children.

From a parental point of view, an interesting perspective was expressed by the USGBDC:

Actually SADTU when they do their constitution and everything, they must involve parents, they must involve children because I think their policies or constitution doesn't involve us as parents and children, we need to have a say when they developing those structures, currently we feel that we are side-lined in such things, yes, when they start developing those things, when they want us to say that SADTU, parents and children is one family. There are huge gaps between parents and SADTU currently.

Besides parents desiring to be involved in the drafting of the constitution of SADTU, through the USGBDC, I gathered that there was a conflict of interest between the union and the SGB. The Theoretical Framework of this study alludes to this jostling of powers between unions and SGBs in schools stemming from different interests. The SGB member concurred:

I think it...it... its different because looking at all these incidences; SADTU has got their own agenda. And the governing body has got its own agenda. So the agenda for SADTU is to say we are supporting our member, the school is there to say, we want the school to run. Errrh...we want our children to benefit, so anything that got to hinder our children education, we would fight against those things. So that is why sometimes you would see SADTU and the Governing Body will have challenges sometimes because, we have got our own agenda, bear in mind that those children are ours. To some of us, biologically it is their children and to some of us by law it our children. But teachers are paid, it is not their children, the teachers are paid to teach those children, they don't have that blood with these children. So yes they got their own agendas, which is why their agendas doesn't serve the children. Because they can say it is their children, but some of them... if one you are driven by politics and you don't have the passion for the children. You won't care about the children development but you would always care about what would make you achieve things.

Moreover, the USGBDC further shared his sentiments with me around this issue by saying that:

Based on my experience SADTU has changed my understanding because previously I thought SADTU is there for the children also, but based on the experience, SADTU is there for the teachers, there are circumstances whereby we will see that a certain teacher, a SADTU member has challenges regarding the children, so they will make sure that... the SADTU committee if I may put it, will be there to support the teacher and protect the teacher. Bear in mind that when you join SADTU as the teacher, you are joining them to be there for you in need. For me SADTU can say that is there to serve the children's needs, but with all the things they do, there are no programmes that they do that directly deal with the students.

The conflicting interests between parents and SADTU were not only seen in the different interests that each party displayed based on improving education, but it goes further and touches on the recruitment of qualified teachers. The USGBDC had this to say:

I would say, at the school that I am at, it is not that SADTU and governing body are in loggerhead, no. I think individuals they believe that there is something fishy on this one. Personally, the issue of recruitment how it done at Umngeni it is not my style, there is no justice in other posts. I must tell you. I don't remember which post that was opened, and then it happened that I was part of the interviewing panel. And then there were people that done exceptionally well, I think it was humanities HOD if I am not mistaken or Science HOD. Yes. There were people who had much experience who shared good things, and you could see that they are talking business. And then it happened that the person that also applied, he has been at school for years, for years, and it is the same person that accusations with children. And it happened that... in the interview committee, the person who was in the interview committee happened that he was a site steward for SADTU. But also he was not representing SADTU in the interview committee; he was representing teachers' side because he was also part of governing body then. So when we were busy working on the interviews, and everything it was clear that let us continue with our interviews but we have our own person. Let us work with interviews but we have our own person. And then when I tried to challenge these things, I said whoo! [Stop]...I am trying to create a war now, because nobody would understand me especially on the teachers' side. I think I would be an enemy with the site steward because he was trusted by that individually, that mfethu [brother] do something.

I asked him to clarify what he meant by ~~we~~ we have our own teacher'' Were these the words of the teachers or of SADTU leadership? He said:

We have our own person as a union... not as teachers because, I don't believe that you as teachers would sit in the staffroom and said there is a post, guys let us support teacher so and so, no. You don't do that; you make your own coccus to say let us support this person. And then when I tried to challenge, verbally I said it, I said guys I don't think we are doing any justice. And then looking at things, the principal was put in a very tight corner because the principal really supported me on this one. But me and the principal, we failed looking at the relationship after the whole thing. Because

this person would claim that this post would be his, and he was supported by his caucus. So he got the post, but I believe he didn't deserve it.

Still on the same document, SADTU Vision 2030, made clear that the vision of SADTU is to involve parents, as the key stakeholders in education, and by virtue of them having a key interest in the education of their children:

They [parents] constitute a beneficiary force because whilst they are not actors in the learning occurrence they are active in the governance of it. The protective paradigm within which all manner of education occurrence analysis is made creates a teacher right discounting environment based on pure parental interests.

However, when I expressed this wish or expectation from a parental representative body to the USADTUBC, he was quick to tell me that parents cannot have an input in the constitution; otherwise, it will not be the constitution of SADTU anymore. Even though he did acknowledge the existence of parents as stakeholders in education, but to him they had no role to play in the way in which SADTU carries out its business. He made this sound so sarcastic and I found myself laughing, because, he made me feel as if the parents were demanding or wishing for the impossible. The following extract from the USADTUBC, for a moment made me think that parents were ambitious, but after remembering what the SGB's account of events at Umngeni Secondary School where SADTU members have been implicated in scandals, my way of thinking changed:

Then it will mean that this is a SADTU for parents not for educators

Even though the issue of contradictions is not the focal point of this section, it is however important for me to raise it here because the different responses suggest that among the SADTU-affiliated teachers, exist different opinions regarding the union's mandate as per its constitution and other documents. Further to this issue of contradictions, in an interview with the SADTU Site Steward and another teacher in a group interview at Vulindlela Primary

School, it was mind blowing to see how both of them were opposing each other's views openly around the theme of improvement of education. The important aspect of this interview that I would like to highlight is that the age gap, work experience, and perspectives on the questions I asked, is very big.

I was keen to know amongst other things why both of them joined SADTU, and without any glitches, the participants were able to take me through the history of apartheid in South Africa and the need for a union that was going to liberate black people, especially black teachers. However, this question was actually preparing the ground for a question that sought to find out from them the core functions and role of SADTU in education as guided by the constitution. Since this question did not receive a well-informed response, I changed and asked them what they expect the union to do in the area of education development and improvement. The site steward had this to say:

SADTU is not only defending the rights of teachers but it also conducts workshops to empower and assist teachers, SADTU, does them. Even though you find that, some teachers don't attend. However, the defending of teachers' labour rights and addressing grievances, is a priority because nobody can work efficiently in an environment where they are not happy.

I am not sure myself whether the above response was a result of lack of knowledge or he was deliberately holding back. Therefore, I turned to his fellow group member and this is what she said:

In my view, we have a union representing teachers, in this case SADTU because there are many, because if there are things, such as grievances, or ideas that I know that if we put our heads together, because it's not always that we go to meetings to address problems we also go there to share ideas and share reports on matters that have unfolded, so that's where members are allowed to share ideas on what is happening in other schools, maybe it has appeared in the media, and how we can assist each other



as teachers to workshop each other because if I am alone as a teacher I will experience difficulties, this helps reduce the burden that teachers have and mitigate challenges. It is not always that the union must facilitate protests against the employer, but it must be a bridge to connect teachers from different schools to empower and develop each other.

I had to verify if the site steward agreed with this view, and indeed, he did, however, when I asked him to comment on programmes that SADTU had attempted to facilitate or even initiate in his school to develop teachers professionally and otherwise, besides subjects' orientation workshops, he flipped the coin and said:

No, that is the duty of the Department of Education, SADTU doesn't do such programmes, but the people that get paid for that are subject advisors who don't even visit schools. SADTU is not doing these programmes full time, because they [education desk officers] are also based in schools. Moreover, there are many schools out there; SADTU can't cover all of them.

From this response alone, I was tempted to label the union representatives as members that lacked commitment and instead push responsibility and accountability to the government. Through this interview with these participants it seemed to me that younger SADTU activists are not so committed towards the promotion and advancement of education through the union, but they use the union as a shield to defend teachers in case they have been charged for particular offences, to negotiate the salaries and to initiate strikes, moreover, to make sure that everyone stays away from work during strikes. There seemed to be a lack of passion to teach and develop themselves and learners at least from the three SADTU representatives at a school and branch level. To show that even amongst SADTU members there are those that think differently, the other member of the focus group [older than the site steward] had this to say:

SADTU has the responsibility to find help for teachers, they are supposed to knock at relevant doors for teachers, where teachers can't reach, the SADTU education desk is supposed to go there, we understand that SADTU leadership is not sitting in offices, waiting for teachers to bring problems and they can't physically visit all the schools, but they can go to the subject advisors and seek help for teachers, because teachers are finding challenges in schools.

The interaction with the two participants drove my questions towards the issue of SADTU prioritising the addressing of teacher labour concerns and education as a last priority. The site steward was not happy that I was actually focusing my questions around SADTU:

I had not checked if that is prioritised in the constitution. And let us not focus on SADTU; let's just say unions, because they also speak about labour issues. Of course, that the beginning, education improvement is secondary. But what do other unions do? Let us not say SADTU, let's include other unions too, and let's say unions, not SADTU.

The other teacher in this focus group then saw that the interview was gaining momentum, and she interjected:

If I can interject, in my view, because even in SADTU dairies, the union stands for education, its emphasis is on what SADTU stands for, they say that teachers must be in the classroom, if SADTU decides to defend a teacher, they must defend a dedicated teacher, a teacher who is always in class, who has exhausted every option.

On a rather different angle, during an interview with the Pietermaritzburg Primary School Principal, PMBPSP, it transpired that even school principals had certain expectations from trade unions, even though the PMBPSP did not boldly state that she expected SADTU specifically to perform certain roles, but she mentioned that from the inception of SADTU she has been a member, and throughout her membership, SADTU has equipped her with

certain skills and necessary information that she needs. But of concern to me, was that she stated that she was not sure what SADTU's role is today, for her it looked as if the union was not the same union that she served some years ago, even though she is still a member of SADTU. She said:

I don't know why SADTU was formed, I think it was converted from NEUSA to SADTU but it has to deal with educational issues and problems that teachers are faced with and to provide some skills and knowledge, because at that time, we were the first people who had information even before the seniors of education had that information. It equipped teachers with policies and laws of education, human relations on how teachers should treat each other at school.

It was amazing to hear how two different principals, from two different unions almost shared the same perspective on the role of teacher trade unions. I had to use the term teacher trade unions when I was interviewing the VPSP because she seemed not to feel comfortable with responding when I asked her to state what she thought was the role of SADTU in schools especially in education, hence I had to change the words quickly. This behaviour could have been a result of that she is not a member of SADTU and maybe she didn't want to sound as if she was attacking it, possibly she wanted to sound polite or maybe, my question was putting her in a corner, she did not exactly have any specific expectations especially because she declared that she was indeed a member of NATU however, she only joined the union officially because the employer was deducting union fees from her salary (as per policy) even though she wasn't a member of any union. This information, spurred me to enquire if being a member of SADTU could have made things easier for her:

I can't say it would be different because as it is at the moment I am the member of that other union. But I am not an active member, just that we were supposed to have a certain union to affiliate, otherwise we would be judged regardless. So initially I had two unions in my payslip, then later I decided that I take one out and carried on with this one. I have not attended most of the meetings that they have, maybe once ever since I joined the union. I am not active and in most cases, we as the managers we are

not allowed to be out of school and leave the school alone even if it is a meeting, but we need to be at school. So we rely on them to come back and give us report back, so I can't say it would make any difference in that.

So just in order to have her name registered with a particular union, she joined NATU. Even though she was a member because she was paying, but there is nothing that really connects her to NATU. However, a more striking feature of her responses was that she was only eleven months old as a principal of the school. Therefore, that element could have also been a contributor to her lack of courage in tackling the question head on. However, this is what she had to say regarding the expectations that teacher unions in general are mandated to do in schools:

To me unions are the link between the educators and the department [department of education] because unions are the ones we are able to voice our concerns regarding education per se as there are problems, we liaise with the unions, they are the ones who take our concerns to the department and through them we are able to get what we are asking for.

The Deputy Principal of Umngeni Secondary School (Curriculum) at the beginning of the interview came across as holding back. I observed his behaviour very closely especially because him, and I are colleagues, he is my senior, but importantly he is an Indian in a context where teacher demographics are predominantly Black. He is also in a leadership position in the school, where has been previously been given a hard time when he assumed office, because SADTU had their own person who was acting in the position then, whom they wanted to occupy the post, but unfortunately, the DoE sent its own person. With this information being informally available in the school corridors, I was able to establish that maybe one of the reasons, he couldn't warm up to the interview and give me an objective view, could have been one of the above reasons. However, in the middle of the interview, I gathered that he was unhappy with some of the resolutions that the union has taken. He did not hide that he was a loyal member of SADTU:

My name is Mr ..., I am the deputy Principal of Umngeni Secondary. And part of my job description here is to manage the curriculum, from Grade 8 to 12. I do all the statistical analysis and the subject packages and drawing up the timetable and all the relevant timetables in times in terms of the exams. Also the administrations of matric exams, I am also the co-coordinator in the Grade 12s managing...their day-to-day affairs. The teacher union I belong to is SADTU, and I think one of the prime reasons I am the member of the particular union is that...I think when I become a worker, as a worker you have certain rights and to ensure that these rights are upheld, you need umbrella body to ensure these rights are being upheld. So one of the prime reasons I joined the union or a particular union, is to ensure that my rights as an educator is always upheld. And also being in the work situation you meet many prices and many challenges as well. And in order to ensure that there is effective functioning you need...representation and that you are also represented accordingly. You need to be part of the union, and that is prime reason why I have been part of the union. The reason why I chose SADTU over any other particular union is because of the historical background and of this country as such. SADTU been aligned with the ANC, which is one of the reasons why I have chosen to be the member of SADTU. And this is in line with the principles and the policies...by the ANC. And also when you look at the constitution of SADTU, I think that is other reasons why I joined SADTU because when you look at the constitution what is stand for, of primary instance is the responsibilities of...and the rights of the educator. Mmm... but I know there are misconceptions that have been created and I think the misconceptions that have been created, is not because of the constitution of the union but rather with people that are occupying positions in the union. And probably trying to gun for positions in the union to...serve self-interests.

From the response above, the deputy principal of Umngeni Secondary School expresses a very important point. He says that he joined the union because of its constitution, which is in line with the principles and the policies of the ANC. He further states that the constitution of the union specifically addresses the issues of responsibility and rights of teachers. The lens at which the USSDP views the union's primary existence, allows me to establish that some members of the union view the union as a force that has the duty to re inforce the ability to take responsibility amongst teacher members. This view was not present in one of the

responses that were expressed in the Vulindlela Primary School Site steward. However, most urgently, the deputy principal saw a crack in the way in which SADTU ran its business:

When you look at the composition of SADTU, even at branch level. There are different conveners, there is a chairperson person, deputy chairperson, education convenor, gender convenor...then you have a sport convener etc. The fact that they have got an education convenor at that level which is a lowest level, means their focus will be in teachers' development. But I think again, maybe not enough emphasis is being place on teacher development, as compared maybe to any other union. Maybe some of the criticism that SADTU must accept, and they need to start working on, rather than looking at the rights of teachers. They should also play their role in finding to develop teachers. But obviously, if you were to develop teachers, you need resources. And as a union I don't think they have the financial muscle in resources to actually do teacher development as the expected level compared to the government and when you compared to NEPTOSA, look at the number that they do have. It easy to do teacher development when you are dealing with small numbers. But also when you look at it historically, their teacher development component or maybe, they bit more effective. Because as we mention though, we looking at the composition, they mostly come from the up affluent schools, the ex-Model C schools. So they already have experience and expertise and experience and they already have a way in which they need to function. And now when it comes to their teacher development, it gonna operate at a total different level compared to SADTU. When you look at SADTU, we have teachers that were trained to deliver at an inferior system, a Bantu system. And unfortunately, the government has not done enough to make that paradigm shift, so that we can move teachers to one level to next level. And I think that is where the problem lies, you need to focus and make sure that there are enough resources directed towards those aspects. So we can step up in terms of the teacher development

The key issue emerging from this section is that the views of parents, principals and teachers, suggest that there is a common thread that runs throughout what society expects SADTU to do for teachers and learners and SADTU' vision and objectives. Document analysis as one of the data generation tools that were employed in Chapter Three, highlights a very crucial

disjuncture between SADTU's actions and official policy. A consensus at some point was reached by participants that SADTU is mandated by its constitution to assist teachers deliver on education transformation, but it is not happening. Even though, the government should assist the union in this process, but there is a strong feeling that the union is doing little in this area of education change, development and improvement in schools, especially in the three sampled schools. The participants that hold these views have expressed their disappointment in the failure of the union to improve education. This section takes us to the next theme of the role of SADTU in the implementation of education improvement.

#### **4.5 SADTU's role in educational change and development**

According to Objective Clause 6 subsection 6.1 of SADTU Constitution, it is put clearly that one of the objectives of the union is to develop education:

To plan educational change and development, and conduct research into educational matters.

Furthermore, in the document review, it appeared that teacher professionalism was the least of SADTU's focus. What is of importance is to improve education, and make it accessible, because SADTU even after twenty-four years of Democracy in South Africa, still positions itself to eradicate inequalities in the education system. For me, personally, this is not a bad idea at all, but I think, the union's constitution in a rather subtle manner aligns the union with politics, and the energy that SADTU would be investing in education transformation, is burnt away in politically influenced decision. However, the question is, how far has SADTU gone in terms of achieving this goal that we see in the following extract, because seemingly, it has failed to achieve what stakeholders expect?

The aims of SADTU are listed as follows: "We teachers of South Africa having committed ourselves to the transformation of education and dedicated ourselves to the development of an education system which is fully accessible, equal and qualitative, free of apartheid legacy and which is the just expression of the will of the people —

as enshrined in the Constitution of the country — hereby proclaim the need for a single teachers' union in our land" (SADTU documents, 2001).

In this section, I highlight a few contradictions as well that appeared in the various interviews. Different participants interpreted education development differently, but of note, is that the UCES and the three SADTU leaders namely: the site two stewards, and branch chairperson, shared similar responses around this theme, when questions were posed. In the literature review for this study, it has been highlighted that one of the effective ways of improving the Culture of teaching and learning in schools is to create a synergy between teachers and education, effective teaching and learning, in Europe, the European Trade Union Committee for Education, (ETUCE) in 2004 launched a campaign called “European Needs Teachers!” This campaign has served as a relevant platform to draw attention to teacher education at a recommended European Union level. This initiative proves that trade unions representing teachers can also extend their roles to that of improving initial teacher education to ensure high quality pedagogical and professional training of new teachers. Kerchner and Koppich (1993) have argued that a small, but significant, number of teacher unions are beginning to redefine their role in educational reform and restructuring.

This argument is substantiated further by the shift in focus of teacher unions in Europe from traditional industrial concerns to a more prominent focus on professional issues and school improvement. This paradigm shift from conservative ideologies is now replaced by what they call professional unionism. One of the ways in which traditional unionism departs from professional unionism is that unions accept a greater role in the evaluation and assessment of the work of teachers to ensure high standards in education. Examples of teacher trade unions that have shifted to professional unionism are almost exclusively limited to the developed world especially the USA, Canada and Britain coupled with limited literature on this topic (Bascia, 1998).

The responses expressed by the Umngeni Secondary School Deputy Principal suggest that it was possible for SADTU to effect changes in education as it was already happening in Europe, as per the expectations of parents, teachers, and most importantly as guided by its



constitution and Vision 2030. One of the fundamental objectives in this document states that SADTU's trade union environment also provides strategic opportunities to advance SADTU's founding objectives to:

- fight for better remuneration and working conditions for educational workers
- represent and promote the professional aspirations of educators
- Play a leading role in the struggle for education transformation to deliver free and equal quality public education for all.
- participate in the struggle to deepen the NDR and for socialism
- To constantly improve the organisation and to conscientise and mobilise our members.

The third objective in the document is vividly expresses the vision of SADTU by the end of the year 2030. This objective is also expanding on the objectives' clause of the union's constitution. For the purposes of this study, I would like to narrow the third objective strictly to the education transformation part only. It is not because free and equal education is not important for me, but because, in order to achieve that, there must be transformation in the way in which education is delivered in our schools, and SADTU, according to parents and some participants should play a pivotal role in that aspect. The Umngeni Deputy Principal seems to echo these sentiments:

My one criticism is that the activities that are organised by the union are not... designed in such a way that they don't disrupt the normal day-to-day, running of the school. There is...to an extent that they are disruptive in terms of the day to day running of the school...What I would like to see, is that these activities being planned outside school hours rather than within the normal seven hours of the contact time, with the teachers and with the other personnel. Yah... that how basically it affects the day to day running of the school, it infringes on contact time with learners I think if these activities are organised after school or in weekends we are going to see a much better light and a more professional light. And I think this is the reason the parents use when it comes to criticising the union.

The USSDP response above suggests that SADTU transformative role in education is dwarfed by its activities that are perceived to be detrimental to the education of learners in schools. His views are supported by the USGBDC:

My understanding with SADTU is an organisation that has to serve their beneficiaries or their client; it's a union that serves the teacher's needs. Yes. When I say it's a union that serves teacher's needs, I believe that teachers pay membership fee, and when teachers experience problems at the work place, SADTU is there to advocate over them.

The SGB Deputy Chairperson's response is not even close to describing SADTU as an organisation that is meant to assist in educational matters:

.... SADTU can claim that they are there to serve the children's needs but no, because with all the things that they do, there are no programmes that they do directly with students...again, ever since I've worked at Umngeni SGB, there has been many workshops and things that are there to empower the teachers but SADTU never came to school to bring programmes for the children and eh... I believe that all the workshops and trainings that teachers go to, like subject trainings, they are not organised by SADTU, and they are organised by DoE. When SADTU calls, their members call them during working hours, working days and forget about who will look after those children when they call those people.

Somehow, the above response resonates with what the USSDP expressed on the topic of SADTU failing to serve the interest of learners, which is one of the reasons; the union is blamed for neglecting its role to transform education:

You see there is something that this department [DoE] has not yet taken to account, is that there is definitely a need for unions and for teachers to meet. Now when you look at the models at other countries, they have days that have been specified in the calendar and spread across the calendar, it's called INSERT. It's in-service Education, Training, so they know on the 14th of July the school is going to be closed, activities for the teachers have been planned, and it's planned in advanced. And they know maybe on the 14th of July, teachers for English, Zulu, Life Sciences whatever they on a specific training module. And if you run that across the year, on a particular day, which takes one day or two days a term. I think that is going a long way towards readdressing the imbalances and also putting into perspective the militancy issue which is always been raised when it comes to SADTU, like having these meetings during contact time. So I think the department as well needs to take a responsibility for this year, because obviously they cannot turn down a general request from the union. But if they set aside specific days that they know is going to benefit the learners via the educators, then I think it is a good course.

I established from this long response that actually some of the contributors to the persisting existence of past imbalances in the education system in South Africa today, were due to the misdirection of teacher unions efforts especially SADTU. These imbalances continue to manifest themselves in township and rural schools. The deputy principal did not mince his words regarding this matter:

Yah unfortunately we need to look at reality, and in terms of the reality as I mentioned earlier on, the majority of members of SADTU come from the township schools and rural schools and if any activities organised by the union, then another activity takes precedence of any other issue and even in terms of the normal activities that is running at the school. So you find that teachers are going to attend the union activities at the peril of these learners...and that is why many of the learners are going to be disadvantaged, especially in the rural areas and in the township areas because those learners are still very vulnerable, and issue that close the link to that, is the social issues. You find that there are more social issues in rural schools and township schools, because many of these learners are not coming from a stable home

environment where you have a mother and a father. So whether they come or don't come to school, is not a concern is not a concern to the learner and is not a concern to the educator as well, because educator is not accountable because parents will not come to school if an educator is not at school on that particular, and I think possible union members from the rural areas and township schools they feed on this here because they also know there is going to be no repercussions, yet if you look at a school that is in the urban area, it obviously parents that have enough money to send the children to those particular schools and obviously someone needs to be accountable, and those educators need to be accountable, not only to the school but also to this to parents. And that is why we as rural areas we seem to be disadvantaged when it comes to union activities.

Surely, with the rich constitution of SADTU, other documents, and the reasons behind the formation of the union, change in education can be effected, because NAPTOSA on the other end, is achieving it in their schools:

I think as I mentioned the accountability factor, in urban schools those educators are liable or responsible for those learners and to the parents of those learners. Because if a school wants to be successive, if you want to send your child to a school that is doing well and successful, you look at the number of disruptions that they have at a particular...so if there is lot of disruptions, you obviously not going to send your particular learner to that particular school. So the lack of accountability is what actually distinguishes between those schools, also when you look at schools in the urban areas, and I don't know how this is come in, but they are...they tend to be a greater weighting of NEPTOSA compare to SADTU members. And when you look at rural areas and township schools, there is predominantly SADTU members and in...and if a new teachers coming in...I mean she/ he is going to be lineated even is not join SADTU as such. So the rural areas and the township areas was close predominantly to SADTU and so is a major shift towards the other unions as such. And that is why we going to get this, that is going to perpetuated. This lack of accountability and so parents as well come on board and take responsibility for situations that happens in schools.

In the Literature Review in Chapter 2, I reported on what empirical evidence says about the apparent decline of the Culture of Teaching and Learning (COLT) in schools where the majority of teachers are SADTU-affiliated members. Studies such as that of Bloch (2009) show that there are many such factors. He terms them “a toxic mix”. The study argues that schooling in South Africa is in the current disastrous state because of the reluctance amongst South Africans to discuss the role of teacher unions in a meaningful, supportive and yet critical manner. It further accuses the nation for being silent for a long time over the role of teacher unions in the country. It is important according to this argument that teacher trade unions are held responsible over accountability in carrying out their legislative mandate as guided by the South African Constitution. The issue of accountability as the deputy principal mentioned during the interview is visible in some schools, particularly those that have the presence of NAPTOSA. Just like Bloch (2009), Umngeni Secondary School Deputy Principal attaches a list of toxic factors that keep South African schools in shambles. One of them is illiteracy and innumeracy. He claims that children that come from township and rural schools are worst hit by the unaccountability of SADTU teachers. Often children, who come from these schools, usually find themselves requiring extensive first year remedial classes at university because they do not possess the required entry requirements. The schools that Bloch (2009) is referring to, are the very same schools that the deputy principal is mentioning above. He further discusses another factor and its contribution to the decline of education. He argues that where there is a high membership of SADTU-affiliated teachers, accountability is next to non-existence.

Even though there are shortcomings with SADTU in the area of teacher development and education in general, we still find teachers joining SADTU in full knowledge of the discrepancies that exist within the union. I was lucky that amongst the participants, there is a female teacher, who is originally from Iran and has taught most of the time in the Middle East where unionism is unknown. Her insight was very important because it allowed me to understand her point of view regarding the lack of teacher development programme in the scope of SADTTU. Of course, she was talking from experience from the previous school before joining our school:

Good afternoon. My name is ..., I am also a teacher at Umngeni Secondary School, and I have joined the school three months ago as an English teacher, teaching English in Grade 12. I have been in South Africa for four years now, and I have been teaching for the past four years. I decided to join SADTU sometime last year and I actually went to the representative of the NAPTOSA and SADTU and I asked them what their stances were, on...the...how they carried out their business. This union and being part of the union is something new to me; because I left Middle East before in a particular country, that and we didn't have unions. And so I now had to come across a union I or had not been a member of the union, and so I really talking on perspective of not much knowing what union throughout the world do. However, my own understanding was that it would be something that would further, what teachers are supposed to do. To help teachers do their job better. Errrh...what I noticed before I was in other school before this was that...and that was through conversations between two teachers. It was that NAPTOSA seemed to be more oriented in trying to get teachers to understand their rights, and to help them on how to be better teachers. And involve themselves less in politics. Now, mainly that might have been because they are not as strong in numbers, but it just my opinion. When I talked to SADTU members, my colleagues asked me to join SADTU and said that is the union that would get things done for you. If you are in trouble, NAPTOSA really can't do much because they don't have the numbers. And they don't have that muscle power in order to be able to get things done, if you are in trouble as a teacher. If you need to be defended with, your rights are not being given to you. Errrh...so somewhere along the line last year...well let me go back a little bit. I actually decided to not join SADTU after I attended the first meeting, and somehow there in the environment of the meeting put me off a bit. It was mainly teachers calling each other comrades, and that somehow having been a history student and a history teacher, that evoked somehow communistic, connotations and I was a bit taken aback. The first meeting that we attended, what we were told was, you have to be ready to turn out in numbers to protest. And there was absolutely nothing about teachers; teacher development at that particular meeting might have been in other meetings. And that for me as a new comer who had no idea what happens in a...in unions, and maybe that what happens in unions and I am just ignorant about it. That kind of putting me off.

Another contributor to the lack of programmes meant to develop teachers and learners, regardless of the union's constitution putting it clearly in the objectives, was the issue of teacher recruitment by the union and recruitment to promotional positions. SADTU is seen not to be bothered if their teaching staff members are professionally qualified to teach in the schools where they are working. Its only concern is the increase in membership. As long as the members are paying subscription, the union does not go beyond that in terms of making sure that even those that the employer has given a grace period to register with institutions of higher learning to further their studies in education, continue to study in the true sense of the word, and complete their studies in due time. Instead, it forever defends even those that have defaulted and in principle, their employment is supposed to be terminated because they have not kept the end of the agreement with the employer, to be unqualified protected educators who are will study for that specified time frame in order to change their status to that of qualified educators. The deputy principal had had this to say:

We are reaching a crisis in terms of education because of the lack of qualifications of educators. When I talk about the lack of qualifications, you know these days when you get a person who has done any undergraduate study, they don't have to be at the university level too. That person tries to find an employment and doesn't find the employment. So to a get a final exit point is to go and do PGCE, and that PGCE now equips you to become an educator, which is a one-year full time course, but that person does not have the content knowledge and the methodology in terms of delivering a curriculum that is going to benefit the learner and this country. So I think in a year to come we are going to be at a point where the level of education is going to drop much more than what it is at the moment. Because those teachers that have those degrees are now going to exit the system when... and we gonna get PGCE candidates and that will be a real major stumbling block when coming to education. But the government also need to be blamed over this because, they are not a strong stumble on this situation. Because you send your qualifications to the SAQA, and they would tell, you now that you need to do this possible here so that you become a Maths teacher. And when that person come to school, that person is unable to deliver that curriculum but the fact that they got that qualification. The union is now going to use that and defend them right to the bloody end. So we have a person here who is not competent to deliver that particular curriculum, but is place in that position is now

expected to conduct ANA do Grade 12 Maths, etc. And who is the one at the end of the day that is going to side-lined? Its learners.

This assertion although to a large extent made some reasonable contributions, it however did not show the position of the union in terms of making sure that teachers that are recruited to teach in schools where SADTU is represented at a site level, are professionally qualified to teach. Therefore, the deputy principal presented this angle:

Yes, unfortunately that I thought is their [SADTU] intentions. But you see, if you are going to protect the rights of the educator, you also need to make sure that the government plays its role. I don't think the union as such dictates as to what the qualification is going to be. If they do that, in my perspective they doing it different o this here, I think here the government need to take a stronger stunt on this one here, as to what the minimum qualification requirements should be... in order for a person to become a teacher. Because as it stands, anybody can become a teacher and that is the disturbance of process.

The issue of education development as I continued to interact with the USSDP, began to move towards the direction of worry for a person who is tasked with the responsibility to oversee the delivery of the curriculum, however, it was evident from his utterances that indeed, the matter of underqualified and unqualified teachers is not only bestowed in the government, but teacher unions need to step up their game, lest, the country finds itself in the same predicament as other countries that have worse education systems. He said:

Yah... it's quite difficult because, you see on one side of the union would be trying to protect the needs of the learners. And on the other side to ensure the effective teaching are takes place. But you need to understand what is effecting teaching, who delivers an effective teaching and what an effective teacher. An effective teacher is the one who is fully qualified and also to deliver the curriculum in best possible way in such the learner at the end of the day would be able to pass and pass effectively. But



presently I don't think the union is doing enough in terms of engaging with the employer, to the address the lack of qualification of the educators. And one reason why the government is not attending to this here is because they don't have the financial resources to ensure the teachers are paid decent salaries. If you are able to dangle the carrot, with the people that are better qualified and people who are more competent to go towards teaching as a profession. Right now, many people are not choosing teaching as a profession, only because they would be earning a salary and you find that many of the teachers for Maths and Science, computers etc. They even go straight industries because of better salaries been offered to them, so you find that we are still left behind with teachers that are underqualified and teaching essential subject like Maths computers and Science. So unions need to step up when it comes to interacting with the department in addressing this very critical issue. Otherwise we gonna be going down, many of the other disadvantaged countries.

One of the focus group participants at Vulindlela Primary School (older female teacher) also shared these sentiments. However, her colleague, the site steward felt otherwise. He said that, there was no way in which SADTU will know if teachers that are being recruited to join the union are qualified or not. Moreover, the union has no power to force the teachers who have been given a grace period to study, if they are not committing to studying. Finally, he made it clear that if SADTU site leadership attempted to establish the qualification status of its members at a site level, would be discriminating against them. So according to him, SADTU has a primary mandate to protect its members, but it has no responsibility in compelling its members to study any further, it can only encourage them because these are adults. I honestly found this to be sitting on the fence, because there is no neutrality. It is either, SADTU comes up clean and discourage teachers who are forever studying and not completing their qualifications, yet they know that they are not fit professionally to teach, or commit itself that it will push teachers to complete their studies especially those that belong to the union. That way, there will be no suspicion of foul play or hidden agenda by the union, as it is the case right now:

For me, all in all , with everything that has been said, but I once spoke to you Mr... about the Grade 12 issue, and I said to you, the way in which things are happening,

for me if I had to teach Grade 12....in all honesty, let us not destroy the future of learners, it must be a teacher with a Degree, not a B.Ed., and a professional degree, but an academic degree, a person that has done it at a university level, when we speak of a History teacher, it must be someone who has specialised in the subject and that teacher must be the one who teaches History to the learners. You can't take a teacher who has a matric qualification, because the academic qualification for that teacher is matric, and employ him or her to teach History because she/he obtained a D symbol in matric, what are you expecting. How is he/she going to empower and equip the learners to get an A or B in History? So at the end, I do agree that the union must fight tooth and nail with the employer that qualified teachers must teach in matric, a teacher who didn't specialise in that particular subject, how can she teach that subject, for example, how can you teach Accounting without having studied it at tertiary level?

The main issues that arise in this section are the question of accountability, taking responsibility, representation and promotion of the professional aspirations of educators by SADTU. As I scrutinise the response of the older member of the focus group in Vulindlela Primary School, the role of SADTU is to take the responsibility of the gaps that exist in education. She suggests that the public and unions cannot afford to always push the blame to the government; at some point, responsibility must be taken. Briefly, SADTU has a role to play too. The participants are not expecting the impossible, because there are other teacher trade unions that are already taking responsibility over education by developing their teachers. In Chapter Two, *Section 2.7* an example of what I am discussing in this chapter is presented. The West European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) is beginning to take responsibility over their members' education training programmes in an effort to create synergy between teachers and education transformation.

#### **4.6 The role of SADTU in developing teacher professionalism**

In this section, I present and discuss the role of SADTU in relation to the promotion of teacher professionalism in education, but most specifically in the areas where the participants are based in terms of occupying office. The aim is to determine the role that is played or supposed to be played by SADTU in imparting teacher professionalism amongst its members in education.

The first participant I bring on board regarding this theme of teacher professionalism is the SADTU site steward/Educator 1 at Umngeni Secondary School. I just felt drawn to his honesty when he narrated an incident that truly portrays SADTU members as teachers that possess questionable professional conduct. In an interview with the PMBPSP (principal), she said even though she does not know much about what is happening in SADTU now because of her role as a principal, she is not allowed to leave the school and participate in SADTU events, but she did emphasise that SADTU equips teachers with the skills that they need, informs them with education policies, and human relations skills. I would like the reader to pay attention to these two responses, and see how unprofessionalism infringed on human relations that the PMBPSP claimed to have been equipped with by SADTU:

It equipped teachers with policies and laws of education, human relations on how teachers should treat each other at school.

In order to understand the contradictions that seem to exist in the union, I will compare Educator 1's narration of an example of unprofessionalism amongst SADTU members and the PMBPSP claim that SADTU assist teachers to deal with human relations issues. He said:

Well, although there have not been so many [incidents] but I will point at one incident that happened in the school [chuckled]. How do I put this? Actually, there was a conflict between two educators, then as a site steward, I was called to come in and try to solve the situation. Well you know there is a principal in the school, so to take the matter...there was site steward and the complainant as well as the principal in the meeting so that we can try to solve the situation amicably. So what I am actually trying to say is that, about that incident...the complainant has a very big problem with the other teacher, to such an extent that they even wanted to actually fight you know... so as a site steward I had to intervene, so I sat down with both teachers and tried to resolve the matter amicably.

From the extract above, I was interested in knowing the teacher unions that these teachers belonged to, because even though they are my colleagues, I had no knowledge of this incident, I was actually hearing about it for the first time during this interview. Moreover, I know that the majority of teachers at the school are SADTU members, and there is only one who has boldly declared her membership with NATU. However, it is not safe to just assume that the rest are SADTU, because I have just learnt that other teachers are neutral, while others do not belong to any teacher union at all even though there are union deductions that are made on their salaries. Again, when he spoke of fighting, I was not sure if he referred to physical fighting or a fierce an exchange of words. So he said:

Yes, physically. So as the site steward obviously I had to intervene and try to solve that particular problem amicably. So I took the two people sat down with them and then we had to at look at the merits of what actually happened, I tried to find from both teachers what was wrong. But the complainant did not want to comply, like we wanted to solve this problem internally, but the complainant didn't barge, she wanted to take this complain to another level like to the provincial office. But as actual, what she did was that, she took the matter to the provincial office and unfortunately, the provincial office sends back the complaint. Because it has to be solved at an internal level first.

Before we proceeded to the next topic of the interview, the site steward had already given me an impression that indeed, there was an element of unprofessionalism in the actions of the other teacher, which makes the way in which SADTU members approach conflict questionable. Actually belonging to the same union, made no difference in terms of bringing peace in this matter. The site steward further enlightened me:

Well...initially I thought both members are from the same affiliation SADTU by the way. I thought maybe things would be solved easily and amicable, but I was wrong. I was expecting things to be solved easily solved but the complainant didn't want to get involved, which is why she took the matter to the next level.

Each participant for this study did not escape the questions pertaining to SADTU strikes especially the famous 2010 strike. Although I was not pleased with the way in which some of the participants responded, because it was obvious even to a child that they were being hostile. The site steward from Vulindlela Primary School was not my favourite participant at all. He made my research very difficult. When it came to the part where I asked about teacher professionalism, he first seemed not to understand what I meant. With this said, I am also happy that I had to meet people like him, who displayed what I felt was a lot of dishonesty in the way that they responded and yet claim that they are leaders. It suggested that some SADTU leaders are not truthful, whether for a good course or for another course. At the end of the interview, when he was off tape, he boldly said:

There are challenges that we face in the union, like the issue of breaking early to attend union activities, but there is nothing that the union can do about it.

The above extract was very powerful, but at this point, I could not further interrogate him, because he said it outside the interview session, informally. To me, it seemed as if he was hiding information and not willing to share it with me, in a platform where I could further engage him and his colleague. The site steward is in the same school where the principal did not mince her words regarding an unprofessional behaviour of SADTU teachers at Vulindlela Primary School. This principal did not hide her discontent regarding SADTU-affiliated teachers and leaders, it was only after the focus group interview, that it occurred in my mind, that the person that is actually stirring problems in this school, was possibly, him.

I could tell from the principal's tone and facial expression that discussing the topic of SADTU's presence in her school, was a deep-seated challenge for her. First, she did not know how many SADTU members were present in the school, which was awkward because she had enough time to address these issues with the site leadership of the union since she is about eleven months old in the position. However, she tried to paint a glimpse picture of the union membership in the school:

I have seven educators in total including myself, but I cannot say clearly how many are SADTU members because we haven't sat down and discuss that. But usually if

there are gatherings of SADTU, most of them go there. Unfortunately, two of them are substitute teachers; they are not affiliated to any union at the moment. So it means four of those educators attend and three remain, or but sometimes they go because learners... we do dismiss learners, because nobody is going to look after these learners. Yes, I am concerned but there is nothing I can do about that. As much as it is a concern to me, I can't stop them because they have to go to those meetings, I... I ... I am concerned, but there is nothing I can do.

With the presence of NATU in the school represented by the head of the school [even though she was not an active member], I thought that, the scenario would be different from that of the other schools, where the principals are SADTU members as well. So I asked a question around the topic of, which union has more meetings in comparison to the NATU members because I wanted to see if there are any major differences between these two unions besides political ideology and demographics in membership, she said:

SADTU has more meetings than NATU. .... Ahhh.... The reason for that ... even though they don't come back with the feedback of what they were talking about, because they discuss amongst themselves...Ahhh... I really don't know, maybe their main management behind to meet with them and discuss certain issues. Maybe they got so many issues to discuss but I am not sure. I really don't know. They usually break up at 12 o'clock when the school closes at 2.30 p.m. so it is 2 ½ hours for each session they have. And another disturbing issue is that for union reps, they got so much meetings and usually they don't have circulars. They communicate amongst themselves, they say there is a meeting, and they just go. If a call would just come now saying there is a meeting at a certain time, it is impossible for them to plan rather they have to ask the other colleagues to help or as the school we need to organise what to do about that in order to accommodate learners. It is not working having your load and that of another teacher...as the teacher; you have to... babysit both classes.

In an interview with the CES and the SADTUBC, it transpired that if school principals felt intimidated by SADTU, it was because they do not know the policies of the union. This

response was triggered by the question around SADTU members having to leave school early in order to attend the union's activities. I was concerned about this act, and I asked if it was not an act of unprofessionalism from the side of the members, which the principals could not actually deal with because of being afraid of the union. Both participants shared the same sentiments that principals are not equipped to deal with the demands of the union. The SADTUBC even cited a case of early dismissal of learners so that teachers can attend the union's activities. He said that principals through the school's management plan must be able to avert a situation whereby learners are left alone, or have to leave school early. According to both participants, principals are failing to deal with that issue, because they will understand that teachers cannot be at school while having to attend union activities. More interestingly, the CES told me that some principals have a low self-esteem that is why they have to be developed on how to handle union matters without fear. On the contrary, the principal of Vulindlela had this to say on this topic of ill-disciplined SADTU members who have the union by their side to protect them, in the process, putting the principals in disarray:

It is very difficult to discipline them [SADTU], it very, very difficult because even if you try to make sense to that particular member especially the shop steward [site steward], they can even send you a message through the phone, telling you that there is a meeting at such and such a time. When you look outside, the car is no more, it's gone. When you ask, where are you? I told you, there is a meeting at particular time. So if you try to correct that mistake, then you are against the union. You are about to be called in to order, because you don't know the policies of the union. So you end up folding your arms not knowing what to do, because they don't give us the programs on how they work on. They need to give the management, school principals their policies, which explains how as we SADTU operates. Because according to my knowledge, there are certain hours that you are allowed to be out of school and they don't bring that to school for us to look at them and be able to discipline their members. Whatever they say goes! Even if you go report the case to the ward managers, they too, some of them they don't care. They would say ok mam we are going to look at that but it, ends right there.

Under this topic of professionalism, I was also interested in finding out if acts of unprofessionalism do disturb the peace in the daily running of the school. With the principal responses, I wanted to know how management is affected. She said:

It affects it a lot, because if there is no discipline in the school other teachers follow suit. If you can't discipline one educator, then everyone would do as they please. So with that you find it very difficult to discipline.

I had to compare the VPSP responses, with the claims that were made by the CES and the SADTUBC. I noted that in the VPSP extract, where she claimed that it is difficult to instil discipline amongst SADTU member, she made mention of the fact that even if these acts of ill-discipline are reported to the District Office, officers to the likes of the subordinates of the CES, receive these reports from principals but never really act on them. This actually leaves the principals helpless, hence, SADTU members seem to be having a field day in schools. On the other hand, the CES and the SADTUBC blamed the principals for not being able to stand their ground and exercise policy, as well as lack of confidence. I found the utterances by these two participants to be an admission of guilt, that indeed SADTU is terrorising principals.

According to the SGB representative responses, it suggests that indeed in some schools, principals are having it tough. Certain teachers want to get promotional posts so that they will be able to challenge them. This is suggested by the USGBDC:

There was a deputy principal post that was advertised at Umngeni, it was a vacant post, and I think 3 years ago before our deputy principal in a learner's affair came, because he was brought by the department. So there was an acting deputy back then, so when the post was advertised, the union member, site steward, I think she was a site steward then. She said to me, [mentioning his name] because we were very close –you know what, the principal would have a problem once I became a deputy principal because I would fight with him.” And I said what? She then said, –No there



is a post that would come, and I've applied, and chances that I get the post are very high." And that person is very connected, very connected in SADTU. To her surprise, department just decided to give the school their own deputy. And then all those eh... negotiations behind the scenes collapsed.

To discuss this issue of SADTU having a total disregard for policies and the code of conduct of the school, I asked the CES for the reasons that we can attribute to this. He said:

There is nothing like that, teachers are guided by the SACE [South African Council for Educators] code of conduct. If there is a breach of this code of conduct, the teacher must be charged.

I then chipped in another question, although it did not exactly speak to professionalism in the context of the school, but it still did speak to professionalism in the recruitment system. I was interested in knowing if it was true that SADTU sells promotional posts or even influences the recruiting panel to employ their preferred candidates. This was because one of the focus group members, did mention to me that SADTU for others is a climbing ladder to ascend higher positions in government, because they know that if they are active in the unions, they will be ideal candidates for positions in the ANC. This question was bashed from all angles by the CES and the USADTUDC; they claimed that if such acts were indeed happening, surely there must be people arrested by now. More over the USADTUDC said:

Obviously, someone will try to sabotage the union, because it is the biggest, so we can't rule out the fact that other unions are spreading this false information about our union. They can do anything to discredit us.

The USGBDC also did share the same sentiments around the topic of SADTU leaders not being really interested in education transformation and issues of professionalism because actually, they know where they have a different agenda to that of the vision of the union. My question was around the issue of successive years of low Matric pass rate at Umngeni

Secondary School. I sought to find out if that could not be attended to by union site and branch leadership and help change the situation. He said:

Because I think all the schools, if they are government schools, government gives you the grant for your resources. And then I think for the budget, for you as a school, you see the budget you given is so little to serve all the resources so you need to motivate, you need to get sponsors. So I don't want people to justify that the pass rate is very low because of the resources, so whom are you blaming about? And I think it comes back to the issue of the unions you know, people are so driven by these unions, and then they forget to develop children. In their mind, they spend lot of energy thinking about union duties forgetting about children. Let me ask you a typical example, I don't want you to answer me if you cannot. We got the teacher who teaches Geography who is a 100% union, in the past years have you ever seen him organising the tour for children for Geography. Who has organised the extra lessons for the children, who...for me I have never had such a thing. No! But you know the issue of the unions and the schools, no! No! No! To some individuals that what they think, because they see themselves...I would become a site steward, then after that I would become branch manager and from there I would go up. If you can take a typical example, our former mayor was a teacher before and then he became a mayor, not because of being a teacher. He became a mayor because he was climbing the SADTU ladder.

Recruitment at Umngeni Secondary School seemed to be a very big challenge because, from what is being said by a parent, teachers are not recruited because they are qualified, but they are because of their affiliation to SADTU and their long service. So the USGBDC said:

Yah... I think people think they deserve the post of their long service, and think loyalty to the union qualifies them to certain posts. You know you can look at the CVs sometimes, and then say, no this one has got a pile of qualifications. And you could see that this one has just did ACE, and six months' computer course and his done. Then looking at the years he has served at the school, maybe he or she has

served the school more than 22 years. So and this one has been in education as a teacher for 7 years, but after qualified from the varsity, so she had thick qualifications. So because this one is having a good relationship with SADTU site steward, or whatever, he or she would get the post. And then there is a huge difference between the person that has served the school for so many years, and the person that is qualified. You would hear from their answers.

The CES did not agree with these assertions instead he said:

If those allegations are true... the law must take its course. The government will have to charge those that are responsible for doing that. Since no body has been arrested, then it means these are hearsays, they are not true. And importantly charging someone is very difficult because you must have enough evidence, so that tomorrow, when you decide to charge somebody else, people have confidence in you, because you wouldn't want a situation, where by you are dismissed because you lacked evidence in your previous case.

On the contrary, SADTU is sometimes biased towards their own members. It does not matter whether during promotional posts recruitment, a member of another union is qualified to occupy that particular post, and SADTU will gravitate towards their own. This reinforces the suggestions that SADTU is bias and that is an act of unprofessionalism. The Umngeni SADTU site steward/Educator 1 had this to say:

Maybe you would find that particular somebody belongs to another union; he/she is a NAPTOSA member, so obviously there would be that biasness, knowing that this member belongs to my union. So should be the one who gets the post.

Therefore, the CES, kept on pushing the responsibility to the government, there is nowhere where he acknowledged that the union might be causing problems in schools, except for when he acknowledged the gap that exists in terms of information acquiring at the different

levels of SADTU leadership. This is surprising because other participants such as a parent representative seemed to be convinced that there is something unprofessional with the union. He said:

I'd say it [professionalism] depends on the personality of the individual. Because NATU and SADTU believe in that, their membership must be...at school all the time. That's funny enough the individual would misbehave, one would oblige on the rules or the policy of the school. And then they would believe that even if the principal tries by all means to discipline of might behaviour, but I got someone to present me. So I think professionalism at school it depends on the individual, because...like also...I always have a challenge with teachers that comes to school wearing their political attire. Or showing the brand of which political party or union, you affiliate with. So for me I have a belief that if you are in front of the children, you must look very representable. But to me when I always saw you wearing SADTU shirt, what are you saying to these people who are not wearing these SADTU things? I don't mind if you wear your thing but sometimes it depends on the environment. Where are you wearing those things? If I am wearing a Keizer Chiefs soccer jersey to my working place, I am telling these people that I am Keizer Chiefs supporter. If you like this T-shirt and you can't wear this T-shirt if you are an Orlando Pirates, so you rather come to my team to support me. So same thing applies, they are promoting their union. This has a bad impact to the rest of the family in the school.

As he carried on trying to use an analogy between soccer and SADTU regalia, I began to understand what he meant. I honestly saw nothing wrong with the teachers coming to school from Monday to Friday wearing a union T-shirt. On the day when I interviewed the CES, I made sure that I included this topic in the list of questions that I posed to him. He said:

Really, the issue of wearing union clothes at school is one of those things that the Department of Basic Education, national, needs to pay attention to. The unions are debating this issue. As provincial we don't have much power to deal with it, it is the mandate of national. But it is not only the issue of union attire, but also generally

teachers are not presentable anymore, dirty jeans, T-shirts, have to wear a shirt and a tie if you are a male. I don't want to even talk about females, they have totally lost it. They come to school wearing short skirts. That is all unprofessionalism; it's not just union regalia only.

Fair enough, what he said was in line with what the SGB member also said, which gives us an idea of what was happening in schools in terms of dressing in presentable clothes and looking professional is concerned. My point of departure however is in the lumping up of two different issues, yes of course he was addressing unprofessionalism which is displayed through the way in which teachers dress, but I felt as if he was running away from addressing the focus of my question, which was wearing union regalia every day at school. Moreover, I felt as if he was deliberately watering down the allegations that SADTU members are not professional in the way in which they dress for work. What I know, is that each union has its own day in the week, when members wear their colours, not daily, as it happens where I work, but still this did not raise any red flags for me, until I conducted interviews for this study, unfortunately, the department official, could not give a direct answer.

Although the SGB member did not have any experience in working with NAPTOSA that claims to have the interests of learner and teacher development at heart, and exercises professionalism all the time, but he did express what he thinks about this union versus SADTU. This is what he thinks:

SADTU can try to manipulate us and say they are there for the children but they are lying. They need to give me the facts that they are there for the children, especially SADTU at Umngeni, they must tell me. I don't know the motive of NAPTOSA, but if most leadership of the NAPTOSA is white people, white people are very wise, they take education very serious. They believe in the position they are at; it is not because they were just fighting without the knowledge. They fight and knowledgeable at the same time, so now we got SADTU representative or high authorities that are there because of their knowledge and wisdom, they are there because they have been elected by their members who knows that, if we elect this person we would benefit.

So between NAPTOSA and SADTU I think one of the two, one of the two... cares more about the children's development than their members.

I am also discussing unprofessionalism in this section, in the manner in which different unions treated each other at school. I learnt that SADTU had a very strong attitude in terms of defending its territory. It did not matter, whether this was done in an acceptable or unacceptable way. Therefore, from the USGBDC extract below, we will get a sense of the relationship that SADTU has with sister unions at the school. He said:

And then also, we had a recent issue [incident] whereby a teacher from another union had a problem with the governing body. And then how things were handled, I think it was so unprofessional or ungodly if I am put it that way. And then when I was looking at how other teachers would react on the matter, they supported the governing body decision. Because that person is not from the SADTU family, but is from another family. So to me when I was critically thinking on this whole matter, it is not a big deal. We got teachers that got very bad behaviour in school, but nobody has ever dealt with that. But because of this person who is from another family, she didn't get much support from other teachers. They were [SADTU leadership] saying, guys you are doing such a great thing because we are sick and tired of this teacher. I would say yes it put her at a disadvantage being a NATU member. There was solidarity between the SGB and SADTU this time. I think SADTU has got this attitude...not SADTU but every organisations. They would say that in our territory we don't need other person to intervene. So it would be good that all the teachers should fall under SADTU and if that...if other teacher comes, eish...it would course them problems. And then...I think way back before the incident happened, they wanted way but even though they didn't disclose but they wanted ways to dismiss this person. When that person had a challenge or conflict with the members of the governing body, they said YES! Now things are starting to happen. I think they didn't have powers to say, let us dismiss you, so as the governing body doesn't have powers to dismiss the teacher. SADTU said ok now this thing is happening and we are supporting you [SGB].

Could this mean that SADTU has manipulated the SGB so that they will be able to get rid of the threat? The SGB member said:

I would say there are cases where certain individuals use the SGB, because I don't want to say SADTU. Because sometimes there are cases where SGBs fight with SADTU. But in this case, I think I will be able to answer you in this way...there was a first incident where there was a teacher who was accused of having a sexual relationship with the child. Based on our investigations, it was not just the first incident; there were so many victims of this teacher. And then SADTU was supporting the teacher, and governing body was not supporting the teacher. The governing body wanted him to be gone, and then in this case the teacher... is accused of ehhhh... of unprofessionalism towards another member of the governing body, she spoke words that are uncalled for, funny enough she spoke words that are uncalled for, but this one had a sexual relationship with students. SADTU supported the governing body on this one; SADTU supported an individual on that one.

I found this response to be very profoundly powerful in so many ways because it shows the reader the level of the conflict of interest between the stakeholders, which is the SGB and the union, but most importantly, it shows how the union can be manipulative by supporting an action regardless of its violation of policy. As the SGB member rightfully said that the SGB had no power to suspend or dismiss an educator, but at Umngeni Secondary, this happened, and it attracted full support from SADTU, just because it implicated a NATU member who was threatening SADTU membership. Such sentiments by parents are also supported by studies such as that of (Pattillo, 2012). As I interacted with different literature in Chapter Two, it appeared that most of the time SADTU's actions displayed acts of unprofessionalism and destroyed the Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLT). In a study conducted in schools in the Umlazi District in Durban South Africa, Pattillo (2012) uncovered what the World Bank (2010) report calls "quiet corruption" which is described as a wide spectrum of malpractice which does not necessarily involve monetary exchanges, but results in a failure to deliver adequate and quality teaching and learning. This phenomenon according to this report has negatively affected many schools in South Africa and across the developing countries. These schools face challenges ranging from high failure rate, high rates of tardiness and absenteeism by teachers, which leads to ineffective teaching. While all these malpractices take place, the public expects the unions to create an environment whereby such

practices are eliminated, and if they do recur, unions are expected to play a role in the identification and disciplining of culprits. For example in the incident above, SADTU was expected not to be involved in this malpractice by the SGB, but instead report the matter to the DoE.

All workers in South Africa are entitled to labour rights, and striking is one of them. SADTU was alleged to have exercised this right without consideration of other factors such as the infringement on the rights of children to education. The most disconcerting matter is that some of these strikes are not initiated for a good cause, but to cause disruptions and to achieve personal agendas. A report compiled by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC), on retention and attrition of teachers in the North-west Province in South Africa, findings report of corruption by unions especially SADTU during recruitment and promotion processes for posts of Post Level 2 (PL2) Head of Department (HOD) post and Post Level 3 (PL3) Deputy Principal Post (Diko & Litseka, 2009: p.323 in Letseka *et al.*, 2012). It further shows that classified information was leaked to the union's preferred candidates to assist them glide through the interview processes. In support of this report, Zengele (2009) found that the 2009 SADTU teacher strike in the Gauteng Province was merely motivated by the decline of the Gauteng Department of Education in promoting two SADTU preferred candidates to the position of school principal. It was alleged that one of these two candidates held extensive experience in administration, as a former clerk and two years as a teacher, therefore, he obviously did not meet the requirements. It is claimed that with the second candidate SADTU exercised nepotism, as she was the wife of one of the SADTU principals and yet she possessed no required qualifications as well. We are told that the side-lined candidates were experienced and held postgraduate degree in education.

The Umngeni Deputy Principal, Umngeni Site steward and the Umngeni Deputy Chairperson SGB were honest enough to tell me, that there were elements of unprofessionalism in the way that members of SADTU handled the 2010 strike but The USGBDC had this to say:

Whenever they are proposing a strike... Ey... This strike thing is not helpful; they need to have ways of sitting down with the government in terms of negotiating labour



rights. Going out and leaving school and go and protest....to me it means...I don't want to be sound rude on this one, but to me it means if teachers leave the school and good to protest. It is good to protest it is not wrong, but how we do things, it is very wrong. You know when you are not satisfied with anything, sit down and speak because there are times when you are not satisfied with anything and then you go to the street and protest. And then there is lot of things that are being broken by you. Forgetting about the children, [he meant let alone] you know one, you are causing traffic you are causing havoc to people that are not involved with your problems. And then after that, surely there are people that are fighting for things that they don't deserve. General speaking, I always say, if you are fighting for better rates, based on what you call... NQF level or based on your qualifications do you deserve those resources that you need, or are you forcing the matters to receive those resources. I made a typical example when people were striking on Marikana, I said if these people once to earn this much...have they went to varsity? Because they are trying to tell me that, they want to earn more than people who went to school and studied. Because based on your level, it is depending on your level, which level do you belong in?

From the extract above, I sensed that the USGBDC was suggesting that even teachers who are not deserving a salary raise because they do not meet the requirements, and because they are not performing to the desired level as educators, are also seen participating in the strike. This sounded as if, he was blaming the union for harbouring unqualified teachers, and there is nothing that it is doing to encourage them to study. The claims that he makes suggest that SADTU members are complacent; they do not have the ambition to develop themselves, while on the contrary they are active when it comes to striking. I posed a question that seeks to understand if SADTU as a union is contributing to the lack of the zeal to study amongst its members, and making it seems as if SADTU is protecting them. He said:

Yah! Yah! Yes. SADTU is protecting unqualified teachers too, because when they fight they fight for the same percentage and for the same benefit. What SADTU is supposed to be saying is, guys study very hard. They need to review your profile to say, you as our member you must not relax, you need to study hard, so that when they go out there to fight they fight for a real reason. I think the government and SADTU

need to sit down and have a memorandum of understanding, between two parties to say in terms of salaries we are this far, and for how long, if you say, you will review the salaries of the teachers after three years, you must abide by that and agree after long, are they going to review the raise of salaries, for now I don't know they have the memorandum, so if SADTU will strike and affect the government because government don't have the budget. Government and SADTU must sit down and discuss these issues so that there are no disruptions in education.

The Umngeni Deputy Principal although in my view there was honesty in what he said, but he kind of sat on the fence for me, he did not condemn the actions of the members nor support them. He admitted that teachers could have crossed the line, but still he feels like any other participant except for the SGB member, that teachers were frustrated, which implies that teachers were justified to act unprofessionally during the strike. He said:

I think what is reflected in those 2010 strikes, is more of the frustrations of the educators and I think in some instances, maybe the way they vented their way of their frustration, they crossed the line in terms of professionalism, but yet when someone is frustrated and nothing has been done about it. And we look at the conditions in which teachers work, and which learners are being taught. The lack of facilities, the lack of resources, and the disparities that exists...after 2010 after 14 years in democracy. I think teachers were really trying to vent their frustration, but then as I said that they did cross the lines in terms of doing it. But I think it doesn't justify what they have done, but I think that somehow it has to show their reason they are being vented in a particular manner.

While the Umngeni Deputy Principal was expressing his thoughts about the 2010 strike, his colleague, the site steward also felt the same way. He said:

No when things are not getting right or we are not getting what you expecting, at the end of the day you would even change your behaviour. I would tell you about that

2010 strike. The minister of education by then was Angie Motshekga; I remember people walking with a big panty [female underwear] written –Motshekga” but that was not professionalism. But they were showing their anger to the minister because she was not meeting their demands. Because that strike took three months or so, but I remember that we were not working. So at the end of the day if you do not get what you want, you would end up behaving otherwise.

Overall, emerging from these themes is that even though SADTU was defended in the manner in which the participants responded with an exception of the SGB. However, even in the midst of those defence lines, there were utterances that suggested that there were gaps between experience and views of stakeholders and what SADTU was actually mandated to do in the education landscape of the country. Two participants, the Umngeni Deputy Principal and Umngeni SADTU site steward echoed each other’s views on the alliance that existed between SADTU, ANC and the SACP. The feeling was that, this alliance needed to break away because it was not allowing SADTU to take an independent decision in solving problems that the education system of the country is facing. This is what the USSDP said:

I think if you are looking at a real true democracy, that probably that the way to go... because in any democracy you cannot have labour and government sleeping in the same bed for lack of a better word. So these are issues that...there is going to be issues that... there. Mmmh... I’m not sure if SADTU goes on its own..., I am not sure exactly in which direction it going to take. But if you look at the cracks at the beginning to open...you notice that this is a start of the process that is going to happen. If you look at COSATU for an example, the number of unions that have...some of them have been expand and some of them have decided to leave. And also there are talks of the new labour union that Vavi...that is going to be set up, the same thing is happening with AMCU as well when they broke away from the national union of mineworkers...and if that were to happen, I think we will be able to have our own voice as a union. And it also helps in terms of negotiations too, because when you negotiate collectively, the needs of not of your particular union is being addressed specifically. If you go back to the 2010 strike, there was that deal controversial there and nurses got well in that deal out there while and the teachers were left out, yet we

were the ones who were most militant and pushing for this here, unfortunately we got a raw deal at the end. But if SADTU were to go on, on its own, they were fighting for issues that is personal to them and to them only and try...and help teachers directly rather than going there as a group of unions together.

From the above extract, the suggestion is that SADTU was not meeting the expectations of teachers. Even though it was involved in strikes to fight for salary increase, but the way in which it was done was not appealing to teachers. There was a general feeling that if SADTU were to break away from the relationship it had with COSATU, teachers' issues would get a better platform to be aired because at the present, the alliance was a hindrance.

The major views that crop up from this section spoke to the issue of unprofessionalism that SADTU was seen to be promoting among its members. One of the allegations levelled against the union, was the inability to discipline its members when they caused chaos and violence during strike action. This militant behaviour of SADTU members was attributed to the strong political background of SADTU. Views further suggest that, if SADTU were to break away from the alliance, the union would have the ability to focus on matters of education outside politics. Politics was seen as the motivation behind SADTU members to be active in the union so that they would be able to climb the political ladder within the ranks of the ANC. This view is in line with claims made in Theoretical Framework under the Political Model of the Management Theory.

#### **4.7 Emerging issues**

This final section of the chapter presents issues that emerged where I put views together as I see them and in keeping with the research questions.

- According to views and experiences presented by participants, SADTU has a role to improve education through taking responsibility and accountability of SADTU-affiliated members' qualifications. Moreover, it has a duty to ensure that its members uphold professionalism. Professionalism will address all the issues that persistently challenge education in South Africa.

- SADTU's role is to encourage and improve COLT although it is not limited to that, however, participants and literature suggests that it is high time teacher trade unions transformed from within so that they are able to embrace a paradigm shift in terms of improving education in their countries. Of course, they cannot do it alone; they have to consult with relevant stakeholders such as parents.
- SADTU enjoys a very strong political influence in South Africa. This ability allows it to influence decisions, sometimes making it difficult for parents and principals to govern and manage schools. This has a crippling effect on the process of education transformation.
- There is a general feeling that SADTU is not upholding the values that are enshrined in the country's constitution and its own constitution as well. Views suggest that SADTU should be consultative in nature when it formulates policies. Parents feel this is important because of the keen interest that they have on the education of their children

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I summarise the research journey I travelled and draw conclusions and recommendations thereafter.

#### **5.2 Summary**

In Chapter One, I introduce the study by presenting the apparent contestations around the role of SADTU. I reported that the research problem was to do with the visible lack of teacher professionalism and a positive Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLT) particularly in Black township schools where teacher demographics are predominantly SADTU members. I presented three critical questions that guided the study namely:

1. What is the role of SADTU in Education?
2. What are the experiences and perspectives of the key stakeholders (parents, principals, teachers and Department of Education officials) towards the role of SADTU in education?
3. How do the key stakeholders think the role of SADTU impacts on the fulfilment of the Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLT) in education?

In that chapter, I indicated that the significance of the study lay in its capability to shed light on the role of teacher unions in education in South Africa. Such knowledge is vital in understanding and interpreting policies that are responsible for education transformation and development; this is in relation to understanding SADTU and its role in education.

In Chapter Two, I reviewed literature. The chapter unfolds through six themes namely:

- Understanding teacher trade unions' militancy
- Parents' experiences on the role of SADTU
- Teachers' perspectives and experiences on the role of SADTU
- Understanding the role of teacher trade unions in school leadership and management
- Understanding the role of SADTU in promoting COLT in education
- The role of SADTU in facilitating teacher promotions

Out of this process, key issues emerging include apparent gaps that exist despite the laudable goals and objectives which education is expected to perform in South Africa. There are various challenges and constraints, which it is confronted with, which sometimes practically, make it impossible for these goals to be realised. The education sector in South Africa, has witnessed many turbulent experiences. These experiences have been characterised by a combination of poor resourced schools, teacher strikes, social ills, and suppression in management of the institutions. This study shows us that stakeholders put the blame on SADTU for this crisis.

Lastly, I discuss two theories namely: the Transformational Model of Leadership and Political Model of Management as constituting the theoretical lens of the study. The Transformational Model of Leadership has to do with the ability of those in leadership positions to effect positive change that will in turn transform the institution. This is the view that some stakeholders in education hold regarding the role of SADTU in education, yet, the reality of the matter, is that the actions of most SADTU-affiliated members choose the contrary, which in some cases, are violent strikes, unprofessionalism and lack of morale, which is detriment to education.

On the other hand, the Political Model of Management looks at the conflict of interest that exists among the different stakeholders in education. The study has shown us how parents and SADTU leaders often disagree with each other because each party is driven by its own agenda. Schools as institutions have elements of politics because there are many parties that have different interests on what happens at a school at the end of the day.

In Chapter Three, I presented the research design and mythology. I positioned the study as qualitative involving learning from participant's experiences and views about the role of SADTU.

Chapter Four I presented and discussed the data. I achieved this through five themes, namely:

- The ability of SADTU to influence decisions
- Gaps that exist between SADTU's policy and stakeholders' experiences and views
- SADTU's role in educational change and development
- The role of SADTU in developing teacher professionalism
- Emerging issues

Major findings include the following:

- According to views and experiences presented by participants, SADTU has a role to improve education through taking responsibility and accountability of SADTU-affiliated members' qualifications. Moreover, it has a duty to ensure that its members uphold professionalism. Professionalism will address all the issues that persistently challenge education in South Africa.
- SADTU's role is to encourage and improve COLT. However, it is not limited to that, because participants and literature suggests that it is high time teacher trade unions transformed from within so that they are able to embrace a paradigm shift in terms of improving education in their countries. Of course, they cannot do it alone; they have to consult with relevant stakeholders such as parents.
- SADTU enjoys a very strong political influence in South Africa. This ability allows it to influence decisions, sometimes making it difficult for parents and



principals to govern and manage schools. This has a crippling effect on the process of education transformation.

- There is a general feeling that SADTU is not upholding the values that are enshrined in the country's constitution and its own constitution as well. Views suggest that SADTU should be consultative in nature when it formulates policies. Parents feel this is important because of the keen interest that they have on the education of their children.

Out of these findings, I have reached the following conclusions:

### **5.3 Conclusions**

1. SADTU is a very political, partisan and self-centred teacher trade union, which is not concerned with efforts to transform the education landscape of South Africa.
2. There are divergent views and experiences regarding the role of SADTU in education in South Africa. One view is that SADTU has a role to improve education by being responsible and accountable for SADTU-affiliated members' qualifications. Moreover, it has a duty to ensure that its members uphold professionalism. A second view is that SADTU enjoys a very strong political influence in South Africa. This ability allows it to influence decisions, sometimes making it difficult for parents and principals to govern and manage schools. Yet another perspective is that SADTU-affiliated teachers are militant and unprofessional. This stems from the political history behind the formation of SADTU.
3. Due to SADTU's background involving militancy, and affiliation to the Tripartite Alliance in the government, it has the power to influence political and educational decisions, rendering it the most powerful teacher trade union in South Africa.

4. There is a disjuncture in the way in which stakeholders view and experience the role of SADTU, and what SADTU is actually doing in the area of education. While stakeholders expect SADTU to transform education, findings show that the union is actually contributing to the decline of the Culture of Learning and Teaching especially in township schools.

Based on these conclusions, I make the following recommendations:

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

1. SADTU needs to break away from the political Tripartite Alliance so that its role to transform education cannot be overshadowed by political imperatives. This will eradicate the militant and unprofessional behaviour that some SADTU-affiliated members display.
2. SADTU's Constitution should be consultative and inclusive of the views of parents, because they are one of the major stakeholders in education and they have a keen interest in the interest of their children.
3. SADTU should embrace the winds of change, that are already blowing in other parts of the world in terms of concerning itself with education transformation in South Africa instead of clinging to politics, which is not helping much in this regard.
4. SADTU should invest in its members by improving initial teacher education. This will boost the morale, confidence and self-esteem among teachers. There is a belief that this will restore the professionalism among teachers, leading to a growing Culture of Learning and Teaching.

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# Appendices

# **APPENDIX ONE**

**ETHICAL CLEARANCE**

**FROM**

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU NATAL**

## **APPENDIX TWO**

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

**FROM**

**SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

32 Range View Road  
Howick West  
3290

The Principal

### **LETTER SEEKING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY**

**The Title of the study:** Key Stakeholders' experiences and perspectives on the role of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) in Education.

My name is Thandeka Patience Sibiyi. I am a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and currently registered for a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership Management and Policy. One of the requirements in completing the degree is to conduct a study. I am requesting the permission to conduct a study at your school.

The school was purposively selected because most teachers in the school are SADTU members, therefore, are perceived to have an in-depth knowledge and experience that would assist in conducting the study.

I request the permission to interview all the SADTU members as well as the School Governing Body Chairperson. The teachers will be grouped together to form a focus group and they will be interviewed together at the same time. The interview will take approximately one hour and it will be audio-recorded. The information that will be collected will be purely for research and the audio-recording will be safely stored at the University for the purposes of security.

Please fill in the declaration form consenting to my request to conduct a study. Should you need further information regarding the matter, you may contact me, my Supervisor and the Research Office of the University.

### **CONTACT DETAILS**

Researcher: Thandeka Sibiyi

0718712732

[thandumuntu@yahoo.com](mailto:thandumuntu@yahoo.com)

Supervisor: Prof. V. Chikoko

031-2602639/0763767836

[Chikokov@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Chikokov@ukzn.ac.za)

Research and Higher Degrees Office School of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Tel: 031-260 3888

Fax: 031-260 3650

Email: [bhengu@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:bhengu@ukzn.ac.za)

.....

#### DECLARATION

I ..... (Full names of the Principal) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I therefore give permission to the researcher Ms Thandeka P. Sibiya to conduct the research project at Russel Primary School.

.....

SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL DATE

## **APPENDIX THREE**

# **LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS**

32 Range View Road  
Howick West

3291

28 June 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

**LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT TO THE PARTICIPANT**

My name is Thandeka Patience Sibiya I am a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and currently registered for a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership Management and Policy. My contact details are as follows:

Cellphone number: 0718712732

Email Address: [thandumuntu@yahoo.com](mailto:thandumuntu@yahoo.com)

I would like to invite you to consider participating in a study that involves research on **Key Stakeholders' experiences and perspectives on the role of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) in Education**. The aim and purpose of this study is to:

- To understand the role played by SADTU in education
- To explore the experiences and perspectives of the key holders with regard to the role of SADTU in education
- To determine the impact of the role of SADTU in the fulfilment of the Culture of Learning and Teaching in education.

This study is expected to enroll a total of sixteen participants. It will involve three focus groups each made up of three teacher participants, three School Governing Body Chairpersons and principals from different schools and the superintendent of education from the circuit office. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be one hour. The study is self-funded on my part.

There are no risks envisaged in participating in the study. There are no financial benefits for participating in the study, however, the study is envisaged to add value to an understanding of the perspectives and experiences of stakeholders with regard to how SADTU is expected to

execute its role in education, as well as help in understanding the role of teacher unions in South Africa and abroad.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number\_\_\_\_\_).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact me at [thandumuntu@yahoo.com](mailto:thandumuntu@yahoo.com) or phone at 0178 712 732 or the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

Kwa Zulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Your participation in this research is voluntary and purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved. You have a choice to participate and not to participate. You are also at liberty to withdraw from the study at any stage, and that in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation you will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which you are normally entitled. There will be no costs that will be incurred by participants as a results of participation in the study. Pseudonyms will be used to identify participants and schools. Data will be kept in a locked cupboard for a period of five years. Thereafter it will be destroyed.

If you agree to participate please fill in the form below

.....



## CONSENT

I ..... (Name and Surname) have been informed about the study entitled: **Key Stakeholders' experiences and perspectives on the role of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) in Education** by Thandeka Patience Sibiya.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to swear questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at [thandumuntu@yahoo.com](mailto:thandumuntu@yahoo.com) / 0718 712 732

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researcher's then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

Kwa Zulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Additional consent

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview/focus group discussion

YES / NO

---

**Signature of Participant**

---

**Date**

---

**Signature of Witness**

**(Where applicable)**

---

**Date**

## **APPENDIX FOUR**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### Interview schedule

1. What is the role of SADTU in teacher professional development?
  - When and why did you join the teaching profession?
  - Why did you join SADTU
  - How do you view teacher's loyalty to SADTU
2. How does SADTU's political affiliation influence teaching and learning?
  - What are your views regarding the Tri-partite Alliance of SADTU and the ANC?
  - What is your personal assessment of the education landscape in township schools in relation to unionism?

### School Principals

1. How does SADTU influence the School Culture of Teaching and Learning?
  - How much time does your staff dedicate to union responsibilities within teaching time?
  - How many teachers in the staff are SADTU members and other union members?
  - How does the membership population affect the teaching and learning?
  - How will you describe SADTU as an organisation? Does its constitution value school leadership and uphold COLT?
2. How does SADTU affect school leadership?
  - How are township schools' leaders' choices affected by unions as they strive to adopt leadership strategies that will improve their schools?
  - What are the main reasons for SADTU's present role on teachers' professionalism and education especially in a township school?
  - How does SADTU's political alliance with the government impact on teacher recruitment, appointments and promotions?

- How does school leadership and management find disciplining teachers who are SADTU members?

### Superintendent Education Manager

1. What is the role of unionism in the continued gap between historically white and historically black schools?
  - Despite high amounts of financial resources invested by the government on education in South African schools, historically black schools in townships continue to be amongst the worst performers in the Annual Assessment (ANA), yet these schools are very close to district offices and resources, what could be the cause?
  - What is the expected role of SADTU in the improvement of the Culture of teaching and learning in schools?
  - What is the possible reason for lack of resilience among many township schools compared to rural schools which often get good matric results against all odds?
  - How do predominantly SADTU populated schools differ from those that have more NATU and NAPTOSA members?
  - What measure are put in place to avert a strike, and in case it's inevitable, what is the Department's recovery plan?
  - How do strikes affect the COLT?
2. How does unionism affect the capacity of principals to lead and manage schools?
  - How do you view school leadership and management in township schools in relation to unionism?
  - Why do the Department of Education's efforts to improve school leadership and management continue to collapse especially in township schools while in neighbouring former white schools they thrive?

3. How does SADTU influence recruitment of educators?

- How does the Department of Education recruit, place and promote educators in schools and Department offices?
- How does the Department of Education deal with appointment of educators' disputes?

School Governing Body Chairpersons

1. What are the parents' expectations and experiences on SADTU in relation to their children's education?

- How can you describe the behaviour of SADTU teachers in the school?
- Do you understand the roles of teacher unions to be?
- What could be possible cause for some parents to send their children to former white schools in town, where they pay expensive fees, yet there is a school in the township?
- How can you describe the matric pass rate for the past ten years? How does it make you feel as a parent?
- What do parents expect from SADTU in relation to the Culture of Teaching and Learning?

# **APPENDIX FIVE**

## **TURN-IT-IN RESULTS**